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Articles by

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Principal Lionel Elvin

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# UNIVERSITIES QUARTERLY

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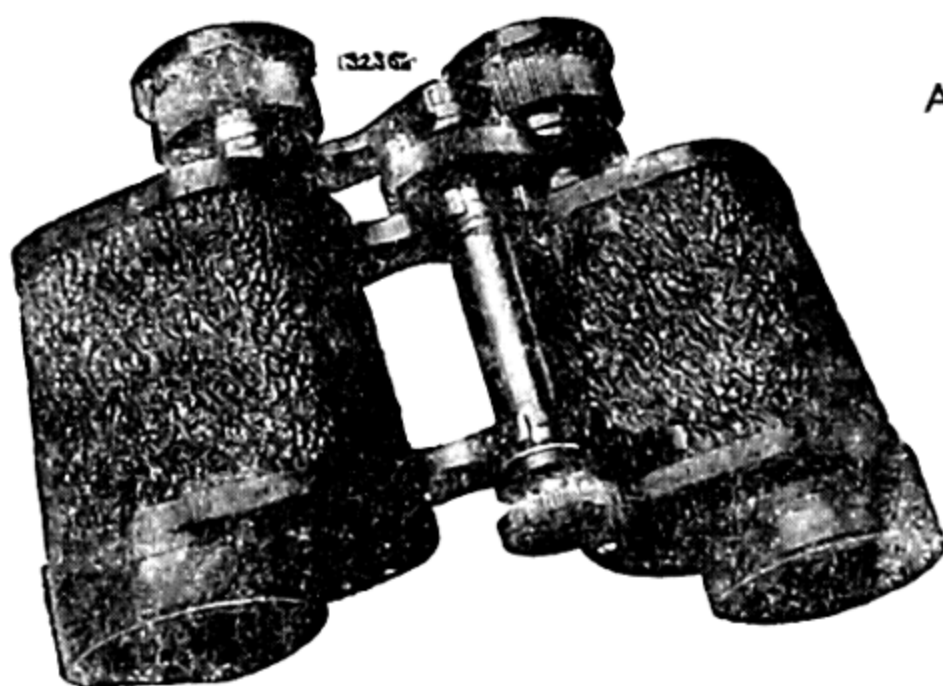
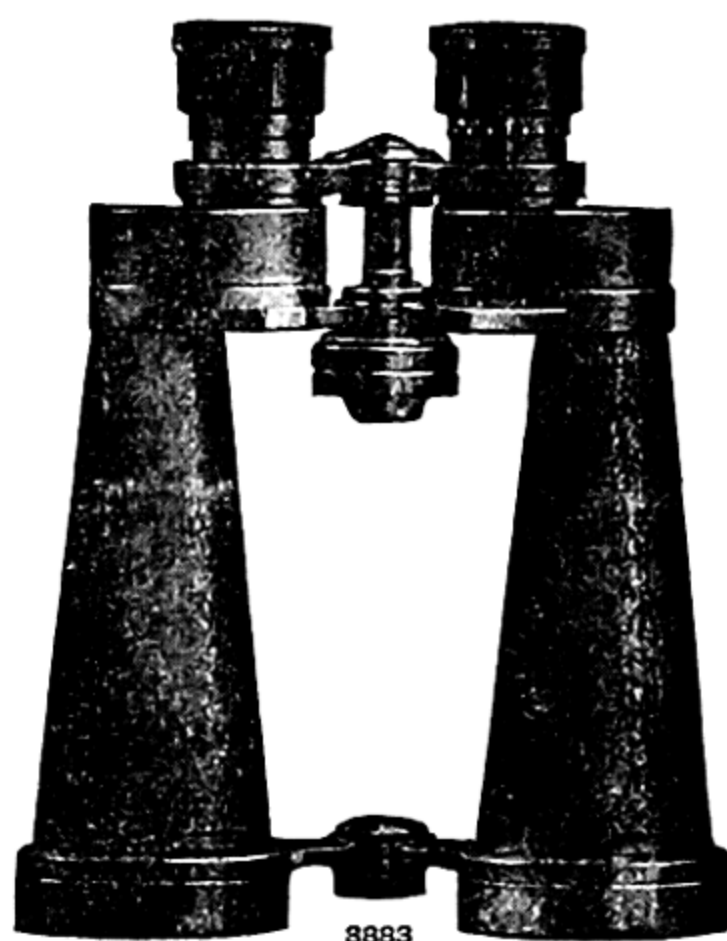
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# UNIVERSITIES QUARTERLY

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## NOTES

### **The Mission of a University**

This issue is devoted to a series of articles bearing on "The Mission of a University," and having an eye to the issues raised in Sir Walter Moberly's recent book.<sup>1</sup> The articles are not the result of any symposium or conference, each contributor having chosen his own subject and method of treatment. Inevitably they do not represent every point of view, but it is hoped that they will help to bring into a clearer light some important questions and give rise to discussion.

The deep interest which the book has caused shows that, in university circles at least, the storm, if storm it is, did not come altogether out of a clear sky. If there had been any complacency, it was clearly only superficial. Underneath there was much debate—and much difference of opinion. In the meantime, partly stimulated by this debate and these differences, there must have been a great deal going on which has not yet met the eye, or is so simple or familiar as not to have been remarked.

Lord Lindsay's article, apart from the great intrinsic interest of its main subject at the present moment, is timely also as indicating just how some aspects of our British universities came into the mind of the author when considering, and seeking to help to solve, the problems of another country. It will suggest to many that a characteristic of our own universities, which is too familiar and taken for granted to be honoured among us, is in fact a cause of their very great strength, and accounts in large measure for their almost unchallenged hold on life and tradition amidst the convulsions of the twentieth century.

It is hoped that readers who feel that some point has been missed or some fact unrecognised will, either by article or by letter, make the point or elucidate the fact in later issues of the *Universities Quarterly*.

### **The number and quality of students**

Has the quality of students gone down as their numbers have

<sup>1</sup> *The Crisis in the University*, published by the S.C.M. Press.

gone up? The short answer is that we do not know. We have not the evidence on which a valid judgment could rest.

Any conclusions that may be based on the graduation lists of 1949 can surely have little more than historical interest, since the conditions in the years since the war have been very unusual and cannot recur. This year saw the completion of the courses of large numbers of ex-service students who entered the universities on their release at the end of the war. These students included very many who would have entered the universities in smaller numbers year by year but for the war; the intake was the accumulation of years. It probably included also numbers of students who would not have entered universities but for the war; some of them may have benefited from more lenient standards of admission applied to ex-service students, due partly to the desire to be rather more than fair to the war generation, and partly perhaps to a belief that maturity and development of character and purpose might more than compensate for lower natural abilities. Whatever the quality of the students, it is certain that the nature of their previous experience was unusual. Their widely recognised "maturity" was a most various characteristic, often but not always an asset from the point of view of academic studies. It is certain that in many cases they had forgotten much that they had learned at school. The confidence of some in their own ability had been shaken, their habits of application lost. Some worked with remarkable zest, some with conscientiousness or even anxiety. It seems likely that many who might have completed honours courses, particularly in such subjects as languages or mathematics, had their studies been continuous, were unable to enter or survive in honours courses after the long interruption of their studies.

But these statements, too, represent no more than impressions. There can be no doubt that the records of 1946-49 tell us little or nothing reliable about any trends in quality to be expected in the next few years.

### **Impressions of quality**

When we consider the students who have recently entered straight from school, we have as yet little more tangible to go on. The number of students admitted has increased, but the overall number of applicants for admission seems to have increased still more. Entry is more competitive, and the standards of selection as far as they



are related to secondary school examination results seem to be at least as high as ever and perhaps higher. These examinations, however, do not constitute an absolute standard. The percentage of passes in the Higher School Certificate examinations, for example, remains fairly stable, so that a bigger entry produces a correspondingly bigger pass list. The fact that higher standards of examination results are required is no decisive proof that students are academically more able than their predecessors.

We are reduced again to impressions. Opinions among university people are extremely various. The nearest approach to a consensus is perhaps that there are more excellent, more satisfactory, and more weak students, but that the increase in the proportion of excellent students has been less than the increase in the proportion of satisfactory and weak students. The best students are as good as ever, and the worst students are no worse than before, but the average quality is possibly lower because there has been a greater increase in the lower ranges. It does not follow by any means that the benefit to the less able students fails to justify their admission. If the impression be accurate that the minimum standard has not been lowered there seems to be no occasion at present for serious anxiety.

### **The debate about size**

The opinion seems to be growing in some quarters that the universities have become, or are becoming, too large. The contention seems to be that the extra numbers of students and teaching staff are causing them to lose some of their character as universities. There have always been a certain number of undergraduates who from lack of ability, intellectual interest or strength of character did no good to the university of which they were members; but the total damage, it is argued, used to be negligible. When, however, universities make a deliberate policy, for some reason, of admitting such students in numbers and of looking after them conscientiously after admission, they are in danger of ceasing to be universities and of becoming something else. There may be a demonstrable need for the "something else"; but a civilised community cannot afford to lose its universities.

There is without doubt a very serious question here. It can be argued with force that there are many people—future ministers of religion, doctors, teachers, higher technicians, and perhaps many others—who, though they will never have pretensions either by

ability or by interests to any advanced scholarship, will serve the community much better for spending three or four years of their youth in an academic community. In some of these categories the community at large will feel the need to press the point hard. But if the numbers of such students and the provision made for them increases beyond a certain point, the community ceases to be academic in temper and becomes professional or technological. Then the particular educational benefit originally aimed at ceases to accrue, and the other things for which a university stands have been sacrificed to no purpose.

It would be possible to conceive of conditions in which this difficulty of balance did not arise, for instance in the conditions of pre-Hitler Germany. But so long as our universities, notwithstanding the clearest sense of their calling, remain as closely linked with society in general as they have been in our democracy for the past half-century, it will always be a very live issue in this country. There will be more invitations yet to the universities to play a new part, or an old part in more intense degree; and there will be more heart-searchings within the walls about the answers which have to be given. In spite of acknowledged academic glories, it would be against tradition if in Great Britain the logic of the learned community were pressed to its extreme, and universities became so academically severe as to find no place, among students or teachers, for any but the purest scholars and searchers after knowledge.

The universities have gone a long way, since Jowett, without in fact losing their pedigree. How far dare they go in the changed conditions of to-day?

# THE MISSION OF A UNIVERSITY—A DISCUSSION

## Introduction

The most striking thing about the "crisis" in the universities is that it has blown up so suddenly. Until yesterday, almost, it might have seemed that universities were enjoying the sunshine of public favour; indeed it seemed a dangerously common conviction that they held the key to many of the urgent problems of our age. Are the medical services insufficiently preventative in aim, or insufficiently scientific in temper? Then push all the medical schools wholly inside the university walls. Are the traditions of teacher training too restrictive and unambitious? Invite the training colleges and the universities to see more of one another. Are our industrial technicians inadequately equipped to rise to the greatness of our technological times? The answer seemed to be sought from the universities.

Everybody knew, no doubt, that the ex-service men and women flooding into the lecture-rooms and laboratories after the war would be full of strong criticisms; they would know what they wanted, and this might well not be what the universities had a mind to provide. But this experienced and responsible generation of students, robust in its judgments as it properly is, is the very last to suppose that, when its views clash with those of experienced scholars and teachers, it has the rights of the matter one hundred per cent. It will leave its mark on the universities; but that does not necessarily mean crisis.

A few people knew, furthermore, that some university teachers had troubled consciences. Could the writing on the wall have been better read in 1918? Could the issues have been more squarely faced, and could the second war have been prevented? Were we living in a fool's paradise, merely sharpening the intellect when we should have been concentrating on the tempering of the will? These were the honorable self-questionings of sensitive persons. But the public did not seem to wish to put the blame upon the universities in particular, or on any other section of the community. Uneasy consciences were widespread, and everybody took the cap for his own head.

Yet now the "crisis" in the universities is given the keenest attention in the public press.



### **The criticism has been taken to heart**

What worries us most is that such strong criticism should have come from so responsible a critic. Dialectic, even in the hands of Mr. Oakeshott, does not help us very far.<sup>1</sup> Nobody supposes that the hole in the defences can be closed by a little logic. It is true that Sir Walter's book has something of the character of a compilation, and that there are shrill tones in some of the pages which would have been expected only from naïve zealots. But no one can doubt that the burden of the argument is pressed with utter sincerity; and it comes from a man who has spent his life in universities, who is accustomed to using his own judgment, and who certainly would not change his views merely from listening to discussions, however high-minded and sincere, at one or two post-war conferences.

### **Wide agreement on three points**

There seems to be pretty wide agreement about some things. First in regard to finishing schools, or academies for empire-builders. Whether or not it is true that years ago Oxford, after the manner of Jowett, devoted a high powered army of scholars, especially in the humaner studies, far too exclusively to the nourishment of undergraduates, with a consequent loss of original thought and writing, it is now very widely suspected that in most universities to-day too little time and energy is being spent on individual students by the very busy teaching staff. Also it is felt that some advances in techniques will be required before the situation is notably improved. The Oxford technique is by no means universally approved, and others have perhaps not come to full self-confidence or maturity.

Secondly, while there are many who believe that anything like an indiscriminate attack on specialisation would do more harm than good, there is a wide-spread conviction that far more stress is laid on the acquiring of information by students than used to be the case forty years ago, and that their time-tables of routine commitments are very much fuller than they used to be. The undergraduate of to-day is therefore much less encouraged than his grandfather was to ferret about for himself in his chosen field of studies; and he has far less energy for taking an interest in the studies of his friends and for those lengthy discussions about how to put the

world right which so easily occurred in colleges the world over when there was time for them. It is at least a common conviction among the middle aged and the old that, with the possible exception of the privilege of association with a really great teacher—which is a gift of God and not in the bond—these were the things of most lasting value in university life.

Thirdly, while there is very general mistrust of any suggestion of self-conscious effort towards “integration” it is difficult to deny that a very great deal of the “research” which university teachers are so eager to do to-day is rather more of the character which is associated with the modern Ph.D. than the traditional D.Lit. or D.Sc. To say that the carrying on of original work was of help to a teacher used to mean that if he was engaged on some considerable work of thought or of scholarly investigation, which would take many years, his teaching would be the better for it. Nowadays to say that research should go with teaching is apt to mean that a university lecturer should turn out one or more papers a year giving the results of a fresh application of a recognised technique, an achievement which will be evidence of technical accomplishment but may not necessarily show any great thinking, original or otherwise. Essential as it is to the good teacher to be himself an active student, not everyone remains convinced that much “researching” in this sense makes good teachers; it can easily encourage talk about little things rather than great, about techniques rather than fundamental principles. Every experienced scholar knows how easy it is to keep himself occupied with respectable tasks which do not cost the effort and pain of real thinking, turning out things which are evidence of industry but require little but competence; but it is important that a university should be a place where this lesson is learned young. Furthermore it is thinking about the really fundamental problems which brings together scholars of different kinds and enables them to help one another in the way that justifies the existence of universities.

### **More knowledge needed of actual practice**

There are other matters of importance too, but these are sufficient for the moment. The wide agreement about them is evidence that there are very many people whose minds are in some things moving along the same lines as Sir Walter Moberly's. This may not mean that there is a “crisis”; but it does mean that many think that

development has for some time been along a dangerous line and has acquired a momentum which will not be easy to arrest.

What is to be done? Sir Walter thinks that just as the researchers are producing the little papers and not the great books, so the authorities responsible for policy are performing the little duties and not having the great thoughts. This again stirs the unhappy conscience. But it may be that this is not the way by which the solution will come in the British universities. If as a race we have a gift, it is for institutions and not for philosophies. The many whose thoughts go to make these fears and judgments widespread are without doubt, each in his own place, adjusting their practice to their thoughts, imagining new expedients or reviving with a new twist time-honoured ones. It is in the English tradition to advance by levelling up to the best practice which can be found; so that the effective leaders are the great practitioners rather than the administrators or the theorists.

Perhaps what we need most urgently is more knowledge of what is actually being tried here, there and everywhere in the universities. To supply this is a great task, and the articles in one issue cannot take us very far. But they may help.



# I. UNIVERSITY OR INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ?

By M. L. Oliphant

*Director of Department of Physics, University of Birmingham*

► It may be that a period of thirty years spent in universities, as undergraduate, post graduate student and member of staff, is too short a time for experience to have ripened into a personal philosophy of the university life, but Sir Walter Moberly's book has provoked an interim stock-taking of my ideas which gives rise to the observations in this article. I offer them with considerable trepidation and hope that my readers will appreciate that these are gropings after some more substantial basis, and that I cannot justify some of my conclusions by reasoned argument.

I am not a Christian in the sense of Sir Walter Moberly's convictions. Yet I find myself strangely sympathetic towards his point of view. As a scientist I am increasingly humble in the face of the immensity of our lack of knowledge of natural phenomena, but in my inmost being I am convinced of man's ultimate capacity to know and comprehend. For me there is still mystery in nature and a feeling of awe of the co-ordinated majesty of her architecture. At the same time I *know* that the experimental method and the intellectual capacity of man lead to an ever increasing understanding, provided these are given free reign and are not stultified or deflected unduly by the weight of other duties or by the influence of those who think they already understand and are competent to plan the future. I find it difficult to believe in an ultimate unknowable mystery which yet intervenes directly in our lives. At the same time I do not think that we can lightly discard the accumulated wisdom gained from experience of life and embodied in those parts of the great religious philosophies not buried beneath the dogma and superstition of established religions. As rules for living they still provide our ideals and must do so until such time as real knowledge can supplant them. In other words I believe our ideals of life, and hence of the university, must still be determined to a large extent by our instinctive reactions.

## ► The function of a university

For me a university is a corporate body of individuals, whose aim is to preserve and continually review knowledge and culture gained

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in the past, and aggressively to attack and extend the frontiers of that knowledge. An institution cannot be a real university unless this dual function animates all that it does. It follows that staff and students must share these aims and must work together to achieve them. The universities, including Cambridge and Oxford, have largely discarded these functions in favour of purely vocational training and investigations designed to solve *ad hoc* problems of the day, rather than to extend knowledge and scholarship. In departments of science, finance from Government departments, industrial associations and industry itself, determines the course of much research, while the teaching is designed to produce quickly, and in large numbers, the men required for the solution of to-day's problems. Much the same position exists in political science and economics. The humanities feel impelled to reassert their ability still to produce the leaders of the nation, so search is made for classical parallels to our present ills or for historical evidence of solutions to similar situations. The idea of scholarship is buried beneath the scramble for higher degrees and the undoubted rewards which these can bring.

I can see no reason for limiting in any way the range of knowledge of man and of the world in which he lives, which is studied within the university, except that it is better to do some things well than so to spread activities that the facilities available are too small to do anything properly. However, I do believe that some subjects as taught in our universities to-day are not branches of knowledge, and that the institutions in which they are taught suffer greatly as a result.

### **Applied sciences in the university**

It is untrue to attribute the crisis in the universities to any one factor. It arises from the same multitude of causes as the national and international situation to-day. At the same time it is worth while to examine one of the possible sources of trouble and to see how it may be obscuring the real work of the universities and spoiling its spirit.

For some time now the conviction has been growing in my mind that the applied sciences, as at present taught and developed, are out of place in a university. It is difficult to reconcile my idea of a university with the type of vocational training which is given, in most cases, in the various branches of engineering and technology.

The attempt to teach engineering in a university is unrealistic, for no university can hope to possess equipment for the purpose which is adequate or which remains up to date and in line with that used in industry. We look to the universities to provide the leaders in engineering and technology. This means that these men should learn and appreciate the modern discoveries of fundamental science from which will spring the industries of to-morrow. Yet engineering departments either insist that mathematics, physics and chemistry be taught without the useless modern stuff which crowds out some of the traditional material they think their students need, or decide that the engineer has so much practical technology to learn that courses in these fundamental subjects must be curtailed or eliminated altogether.

### **A possible solution**

If the applied sciences are to remain in any university they must become studies in the engineering sciences. Courses in sewage disposal, petroleum production, brewing, tanning of leather, etc. must be replaced by thorough training in modern mathematics, including the newer methods in applied mathematics, modern physics in all its branches, recent advances in chemistry and in other subjects cognate to the future of technology. In this way the university would convert those courses which are rapidly dragging it down to the level of a technical college, into disciplines which are in accord with its real spirit and function. At the same time it would provide for the desperate need of the country for men with a background which will enable them to raise the standards of engineering and technology to new levels of originality and of production.

There is no doubt that a solution of this country's economic ills can be found only by an increasing application of science and the scientific method to industry, and to the human problems associated with a high level of production in a social security state. This does not mean that the universities, as such, should concern themselves directly with the application of science to these problems, at the expense of their primary duty to foster and disseminate knowledge. Indeed, it is highly dangerous for the natural growth of understanding to be deflected for such a purpose, since the results of fundamental science accumulating at the present time are the raw materials of the applied sciences of to-morrow. On the other



hand we should and must develop in Britain institutes of technology, universities of applied science, or whatever the susceptibilities of the engineers allow them to be called.

Medicine has been an honoured discipline in the universities for a very long time. Indeed, much of early science arose from the curiosity of medical men. The earlier years of a medical course, which lay the scientific foundations for an art superimposed in the clinical years, are, or can be, of the same fundamental significance as other activities in a university. The clinical training which follows has always been carried out in a workshop, the hospital, and has played little part in true university activity. This separation from the university proper of the applied science has prevented the unfortunate effects which have accrued from the teaching of other applied sciences in the universities. Even the acute questions of differential salaries for clinicians, which many engineers think should apply equally to them because of competition with industry for the best men, has had less effect than feared, because the clinicians are apart from the university itself, in their own institution, the hospital.

No attempt is made to turn out doctors from the universities, but they do claim to produce applied scientists in the many branches of engineering and technology which are the major activities of many Red Brick universities. There is every reason why the engineer should receive a healthy background of fundamental knowledge in the university, oriented properly towards his future vocation. The applied science should be added in separate, and possibly attached, institutions, or in industry itself. The teaching hospitals are attached to universities, and the senior clinicians have the status of professors. Why is it not possible to have similar institutions to provide the practical training of engineers and technologists? Why cannot a mining engineer be given his instruction in mining, as such, in a "teaching" mine, where the senior engineers are professors in a university?

### **Universities and the planned State**

The heritage of learning and scholarship, which is the basis of the true university, is one of the most precious possessions of mankind. University traditions have grown gradually over a long period and have consolidated after many experiments and the elimination of much which did not prove of permanent value. Many mistakes

have been made, but the underlying core of experience has stood the test of time and cannot be disregarded. A university is not a static foundation, but one which absorbs, by an evolutionary process, the best of the results of all serious experiments in higher education. In my view the experiment of the late nineteenth century, which introduced the complex divisions of engineering and applied science to the universities, has been a failure, whereas the growth of the fundamental sciences has added to their stature. We must choose between the retention of the applied sciences, with increasing pressure from without to devote the efforts of the universities to a planned attack on the economic and social problems of our times, and the preservation of all that is of permanent value in our university system.

I am most anxious that these remarks should not be interpreted as an attack on the applied sciences. I am in wholehearted sympathy with every effort to improve the standards of engineering education and practice in this country. I do believe that the inclusion of the 'clinical' aspects of practical engineering and applied science within the university inhibits the very substantial expenditure on these subjects which is essential to raise them to the levels demanded by our national economy, and reacts unhealthily on the academic disciplines which are the prime interests of any real university. The provision of institutions devoted primarily to the practical aspects of applied science, loosely attached to universities and located on or near the university sites, would obviate these difficulties and would provide a healthy climate for the proper development of the special functions of both aspects of higher education and research.

It is clear that for me the mission of the university is to guard jealously scholarship and knowledge and to preserve the freedom to gather fresh knowledge as and where inspiration comes. In this way, and in this way alone, will it fulfil the deep desires of the human heart, and at the same time lay the foundations for an increasing application of knowledge to the economic problems of the country and to the well-being of man. Perhaps this sounds a little like the traditional way of reaction, but I believe it to be the only way to progress.

## II. THE UNIVERSITIES & SOCIAL CHANGE

By Lionel Elvin

*Principal of Ruskin College, Oxford*

### Is there a crisis ?

"My friend, may it be your fate to live in interesting times." If the old Chinese curse has validity then we are certainly accursed now. Never before has change been so rapid or have problems been so difficult to isolate so that they may be dealt with successfully. People are tempted to say now that they would much prefer a cycle of Cathay to another fifty years of "progress". But whether, even so, it is accurate to describe our period as one of "crisis", as distinct from one of unusual difficulty, may be doubted. Certainly if one states that there is a crisis in the British universities one must mean something more specific.

Sir Walter Moberly does. In his recent book he describes the universities as affected by the larger crisis in the world. But he argues further that in a quite exceptional way they are now failing to be conscious of the needs of the times and to give the guidance that they should. There are many things in the universities that need reconsideration and amendment, but on any reasonably relative showing I do not believe that they are in a state of "crisis" in this sense.

In the June number of the *Cambridge Journal* Mr. Michael Oakeshott wrote a sustained, an often wise, and an often perverse review of Sir Walter's book. He is distressed at the presence in the book, not merely of arguments for university reform, but of a revivalist call to redemption in the presence (so to speak) of the atom bomb. I too, if I may say so, regret this recurrent note; and one of my reasons is that it enables Mr. Oakeshott, by concentrating his attack on the weakest part of the book, to dismiss far too easily the case for reconsidering the conditions of university life and work in the present period of significant social change. In this article I should like to consider that case, and some of the arguments against it, after having dealt with the over-statement (as it seems to me also) that gave Mr. Oakeshott his opportunity.

### The fundamental questions

Sir Walter Moberly's charge is, not that the universities do not conform to some one doctrine (he is courageous in saying that he



would not press for conformity even to his own strongly held Christian beliefs), but that students do not ask, and are not encouraged by their teachers to ask, the really fundamental questions. The most important question of all is how a man should live.

Such tentative answers as one is able to give to that question are apt to be discovered in the act of living itself, and though it should certainly be discussed often, those who discuss it formally are not necessarily the best guides. It is not at all certain that the British universities are failing more in this respect than they have in the past.

As for more formal discussion, my impression is very different from Sir Walter's. Admittedly I am speaking chiefly of Oxford and Cambridge, though I wonder if they are markedly exceptional in this. If one looks at any college notice board one finds it thick with announcements of societies, official and unofficial, for the discussion of all the "fundamental questions" under the sun. One must not generalise too much from such memories as Lord Keynes has given of his own circle at Cambridge or of those of other intellectuals about the delightful and stimulating university of their youth; there were undergraduates then also of a different kind (and rather more sheer idlers than Mr. Oakeshott chooses to allow).

My impression is that the average undergraduate is responding at least as seriously now to the challenge of his time as he ever did—but of course it is never quite the same challenge, or at least a challenge presented in quite the same terms, and this sometimes makes fathers feel that there has been a sad falling off. I doubt if there has; and I am sure that there has not been such a falling off as to justify the use of the word "crisis". It was, after all, Matthew Arnold in 1865 who described Oxford as "so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century", and lest this be mistaken for unironic praise, added the quotation, "There are our young barbarians at play".

Dons, no doubt, are harder to defend than undergraduates. Mr. Oakeshott makes a pretty good defence, except that King Charles's head has to come in and we have to be told that if there can never be another Lowes-Dickinson it is somehow all the fault of the State. Sir Walter Moberly is right, ultimately, when he argues that it is not enough for university tutors to show how something may be done: one must ask also whether things are worth the doing. But it is fair to remember that in some studies

(psychology, for example) the first effort of original teachers may well be to attack former conceptions of ethical behaviour whose categories are too cramping for them to perform their work. There are some university teachers who stop there and, either from modesty or a disappointing timidity, do not go on to ask value questions, re-stated (if they wish) in their own way. But is this really more evident now than in the past? I doubt it. And I sympathise with Mr. Oakeshott about a certain kind of "dynamic" teacher (though I would add, not the only kind) who will most certainly make an important question trivial by "hotting it up".

The dons, we are told, are doing their work so ill that very many undergraduates are "lost". There are moments when I am tempted to say, personally, that there still aren't enough who are. No doubt there are people who stay away from college chapel without knowing why they stay away (if they were pressed to go, equally they would not know why they went). My experience at Oxford and Cambridge is that there are great numbers, bred on a quite un-intellectual "public school religion", who not only cannot give reasons for their beliefs but cannot even say in the broadest terms what it is that going to chapel implies that they do believe. There are others who ought to be "lost", not because they are mere conformists, but because they are much too confident dogmatists, religious, political or social. It is surely the positive business of university teachers to sow doubts in such minds, whatever the dogma, and to suggest that no faith is worth having that has not been born out of, and continued to live with, a lively scepticism. Beliefs and philosophies we certainly need, but how else can they be kept humane?

In our time of rapid change it is to be expected, and indeed it is right, that the creeds and the scepticisms should fight their fights out in the universities as well as elsewhere. I have an instinctive distrust of those, however tolerant and liberal in themselves, who advocate a "coherent philosophy" or a "unifying discipline". They may or may not have axes of their own to grind, and sometimes they are too liberal to make the personal suspicion fair. But they will certainly be used by people who have.

### **Democracy and the philosophic impasse**

If there is no prospect of agreement between those who hold to rival philosophies, metaphysical or social, and if for many there is a

reluctance now to give themselves over to any one system, no one need feel that therefore the universities are "lost" or that they are allowing their young men and women to be so in any fundamental sense. There is danger in trying to get out of such difficulties by a short cut. One need not be an entire relativist to agree that, as tendencies in society and in its intellectual climate develop, certain ways of looking at things, as well as of doing things, seem to be more relevant than others. And the best method of discovering these ways as soon as may be is by full and fair discussion.

This is where the democratic habit, peculiarly developed in this country, of not pushing people to philosophic extremes may be especially valuable. In the broad sense we have learned, and not least in our universities, to tolerate at least those who will also be tolerant and to work together for immediate purposes with those who may differ from us about ultimate ends. Sir Walter Moberly is himself an outstanding exponent of such a tradition, but he nevertheless feels such an attitude to be inadequate in critical times, because it leaves ends too unexamined as compared with means. It need not do so. Ends should be examined, but not in such a way that we cease to discover where we may agree in practice whatever our further differences.

What we have a right to expect is that in universities both ends and means shall be discussed with the finest temper of mind and spirit. And in a time of transition this, rather than coherence or unified guidance, is the best contribution to public and philosophic questions that universities can make. Every critic anxious that universities shall rise to "the height of the times" will feel disappointment with many places and many persons. But, again on any relative showing, are the universities failing here conspicuously as compared with the past? If a visitor from China wished to discover the thinking of English men and women of different ages about the problems that beset us, would he not be well advised to spend two thirds of his time at least listening and questioning in the universities? One thing is certain: that when he sought to describe their state, and reflected also on his own country and its universities, he would not use the word "crisis".

### **The universities and the vital ideas of the time**

What now is the positive case for a willingness in the universities to move with the times? I should like to consider this first in general



and then in relation to a few important features of contemporary university life.

Let it be said at once that there are some things in our time, as in all times, with which the universities should be resolute not to move. Mr. Oakeshott is right, in principle, when he says that the supposed duty of a university to reflect the times may conflict with its duty to give guidance. He is, however, so out of conceit with his own times as to see this conflict now as absolute. Dear, dear! However, later in his article he puts the matter much more reasonably when he says that the character of a university may change, but that what is to be avoided is change of such a kind that the university loses its sense of identity; and with this no one will disagree. But what is a change that would cause a university to lose its sense of identity? Some of the changes in German universities after 1933? Beyond a doubt. The substitution of a cafeteria system for a served dinner in Magdalen? Certainly not—though how many Magdalen men would have thought so fifty or even thirty years ago? And between these two extremes there are many arguable cases.

New ways of looking at things are closely associated with general changes in society. Universities may respond to such ideas and to such social pressures in a way that may threaten their true function. Mr. Oakeshott sees this. But he does not see that to refuse to respond to them at all may be an equal peril. Had the English universities of the seventeenth century remained "scholastic" and continued to deserve the strictures of Bacon, Milton and Hobbes, they would have been not merely poorer servants of the nation but less good as universities. The right course is surely for universities to respond to such ideas and such social forces *at the right level*.

### **The universities and the idea of democracy**

The most important social idea, and the most important social change, of our time is that associated with the word "democracy". This for many now implies Socialism; for others it still does not. I am taking the word here in its broadest sense. Sir Walter Moberly has no hesitation in accepting democracy as something that in principle is here and cannot be ignored. He says: "If industrialism and democracy are the outstanding and significant forces in the modern world, no philosophy of life or education which gives to them only a secondary place and a subsidiary function can hope to

convince". Surely that is sound. And he is not to be disposed of by pointing out (as is of course true) that industrialists have often brought illegitimate pressure to bear on universities or that a naïve equalitarianism may threaten university standards.

We have critics who take a different view and who regard the impact of equalitarianism upon culture and of democracy upon the universities with disquiet or even extreme anger and alarm. The most subtle and sensitive statement of such a case seems to me Mr. T. S. Eliot's in his *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. Mr. Eliot considers culture as related to a whole society (the sense of the anthropologist), as related to a person (on the whole, Matthew Arnold's sense), and, linking these two, as related to a class. For him the link is all important. Culture is a living growth and can only be effectively transmitted over a period of generations and above all by the family. Indeed, he defines a class as a group of families persisting, from generation to generation, each in the same way of life. A class is therefore a real, a living, a partly sub-conscious thing, and is very different from an élite, whose members have only their expertise in common. Therefore, he feels, in a highly civilised society there must be, not a completely rigid, but a marked and stable differentiation of classes.

If this were all true it would offer no basis for action now except at best a very sad and rearguard action. There may be times when no more is possible, and presumably Mr. Eliot feels this to be so now. What he does not discuss is whether there is now any basis for the very stable class-divided society he postulates; and to argue for such a society in the interests of culture when there may be no such possible basis, instead of seeing what level of culture is possible within the society that we are likely to have, seems to me somewhat dangerous. The basis for the persistence of groups of families from generation to generation, each in the same way of life, must clearly be economic. And for its stability there must be a lack of rapid technological and social change. In our times neither condition is present. There is no more basis for the kind of society Mr. Eliot desires than there is in the United States now for reviving the supposed virtues of the way of life of the Old South.

Mr. Oakeshott is less measured than Mr. Eliot. He does not regret, he denounces. And his comments, for a historian, on the most important feature of recent British history sound more like bad Burke than good Acton. He says: "In the past a rising class

was aware of something valuable enjoyed by others which it wished to share; but this is not so to-day. The leaders of the rising class are consumed with a contempt for everything which does not spring from their own desires, they are convinced in advance that they have nothing to learn and everything to teach, and consequently their aim is to loot—to appropriate to themselves the organisation, the shell of the institution, and convert it to their own purposes." He makes it clear, too, that he is referring to the British working classes by a reference that follows immediately to the Secretary of the Workers' Educational Association. One wonders: has he ever met Mr. Green—surely the mildest mannered man that ever cut a throat? Oddly enough, it was Mr. Oakeshott who accused Sir Walter Moberly of hysteria.

Against these views one might set two others, less recent but more modern. Mr. Eliot says what there is to be said for culture as the expression of a static, class-divided society. But how narrow and inadequate that view is! Mr. Eliot says (and in a sense justly) that Matthew Arnold's culture was "thin" because he had too little understanding of the way culture is rooted in a society, but Arnold seems to me still to have a truer and a more generous vision. Culture, he says, "seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them, freely, nourished and not bound by them. This is the *social idea*; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to another, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanise it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time."

What Señor Ortega y Gasset has to say in "The Mission of the University" is also very relevant. He defines culture simply, as the system of vital ideas by which an age lives. What was taught in the mediæval university, for instance, was not something merely professional or ornamental. "It was, on the contrary, the system of ideas, concerning the world and humanity, which the man of the time possessed. It was, consequently, the repertory of convictions



which became the effective guide of his existence." He goes on: "Life is a chaos, a tangled and confused jungle in which man is lost. But his mind reacts, against the sensation of bewilderment; he labours to find 'roads', 'ways', through the woods, in the form of clear, firm ideas concerning the universe, positive convictions about the nature of things. The ensemble, or system of these ideas, is culture in the true sense of the term; it is precisely the opposite of external ornament. Culture is what saves human life from being a disaster; it is what enables a man to live a life which is something above meaningless tragedy or inward disgrace."

Coming to the university Señor Ortega argues that it has developed the mere seed of professional instruction into an enormous activity, has added the function of research, and has abandoned almost entirely the teaching or transmission of culture as he has defined it. "Hence it is imperative to set up once more, in the university, the teaching of culture, the system of vital ideas, which the age has attained. This is the basic function of the university. This is what the university must be, above all else."

But Señor Ortega understands that we live in changing times, and he proceeds at once to consider the effect on the university's function of the social change of our time that is the most significant. He has his answer: "If the working man should become the governing man tomorrow, the problem remains the same: he must govern in accordance with the height of the times." And he adds a footnote: "Since in actual practice the working man does govern, sharing that function with the middle class, it is urgent that the university education be extended to him."

This working principle seems to me the right one: not only more generous, but likely to produce both a better society and a better university than its opposite.

### **The conditions of university life**

Although this principle may be widely accepted (and in spite of Mr. Eliot's doubts and Mr. Oakeshott's anger, I think it is) its intelligent application is a matter of innumerable practical difficulties, and controversies. There is always a temptation to deal with such problems one by one as best we may, without attempting to see the picture as a whole. Mr. Oakeshott seems to think that the universities have been very much "planned" (presumably from the outside) in the last twenty-five years. This seems at the least some-

what doubtful. Indeed one of the few charges not made by liberals of the older school against our increasingly collectivist State is that it has failed to respect university independence, even though so high a proportion of university expenditure has to be met by the State. And certainly nobody in this country (except members of one political party that is most unlikely ever to gain power here) would wish to "plan" them in the sense that Mr. Oakeshott seems to fear.

The truth is that unless the State had given greatly increased financial support to the universities, and steadily increasing financial support to the students, they would not have been able to do anything like the range or the quality of work that they themselves desire. One consequence of this State interest in university education is that at least we are beginning to get a better sense of the picture as a whole, and by "we" I mean not only the Government, not only the citizens, but universities themselves. At this no reasonable person can cavil. Not the least of its virtues is that it often enables us to avoid what might otherwise be a demand for "planning" from outside. For when the relevant facts are all known people with fundamentally the same educational values may find they in fact agree although on the basis of partial information they might have fought furiously.

There is undoubtedly need for further and very sensitive consideration of the degree to which university life is properly the direct concern of a democratic society acting through its Government and the degree to which it is not. If there may be a danger of intrusive "planning" there is no less a danger that the phrase "academic freedom" may sometimes be invoked to defend things that are not properly matters of academic freedom at all. The essential, the indispensable, academic freedom is the freedom of the teacher and the research worker to teach what they believe to be sound and to work at what they believe to be important without any pressure from outside interested parties. But the decision, for instance, that a boy or girl who measures up to the required standard shall not be debarred from a university education by his parents' poverty is a social decision, and rightly so. The application of such a principle is much better made (as it has been so far as it has gone) by a series of co-operative and often tacit understandings, and no doubt over a period of time, rather than by some grandiose formula. But on the point of principle there should

be no hesitation in the England in which we now live. It is not enough to look for undergraduates who can make use of the life that has hitherto been offered at universities, in all its social as well as its educational details. We must expect undergraduates who will tend to use some sides of such life (especially social life) in a way that is different from that of the Oxford or Cambridge undergraduate of the past. Also it seems foolish to resent the changes that will be involved so long as they assist the university, rather than hindering it, in fulfilling its essential purposes in a society that, whether some dons are happy about it or not, is bound to change.

### Physical conditions

Mr. Oakeshott gives the impression that he would very much resent the modification of university life as he has known it (in Cambridge) with its many amenities, but he impatiently rejects, with a not very apposite German comparison, the anxiety to provide more halls of residence for Red Brick. Any one with any knowledge or sympathetic imagination at all knows how poor a thing, compared with undergraduate life at Oxford or Cambridge, is a university day which consists of emergence from a home or lodgings in some industrial city, transport by way of a crowded 'bus, or tram or train to a lecture in a smoke-stained nineteenth century building, and then back by 'bus or tram or train again. Halls of residence would do a great deal (one is surprised that the case needs arguing) to make that "gift of an interval", which Mr. Oakeshott rightly says is the characteristic gift of the university to the undergraduate, somewhat less ungracious at Redbrick than it has hitherto been. And this is more, not less, important as an increasing proportion of university students comes from working class homes.

Now at the present time, with our shortage of labour and materials, there are most uncomfortable choices to be made and there are two opposite considerations always to be borne in mind. On the one hand, graciousness of culture is sometimes assumed to be more dependent on outward comfort than it really is. I have, for instance, been in Jewish settlements in Palestine where I had the feeling, though I was only a passing visitor, that there was a more genuine and living culture than in some "cultivated" circles that I had known; and this was a culture, not of uneducated, but of very poor and labouring men and women. Every time we hear a protest that pressure of numbers or the increase of poor students is threaten-



ing the universities we ought to ask whether it is the reality that is being threatened (as it may be, for instance, if tutors are pressed too hard by numbers of students) or something that we should be able to let go with a good conscience in the interest of something more important.

On the other hand we ought not to forget that a university is not a matter of lectures and seminars but of a way of life, and that graciousness in that way of life does have its physical prerequisites. If the boy who goes to Oxford or Cambridge from a working class home is, in a sense, less ready to enter into all its opportunities than some one from more fortunate surroundings, he may in another sense be all the more eager and ready to benefit. And those who do not go there, but to Red Brick, deserve something very much better than they get now, and that their authorities are doing the best they can to give. In many ways standards of student expenditure at Oxford and Cambridge in the middle of this century will be much lower than they were at its opening (and not through some villainy of the University Grants Committee or the Ministry of Education); but equally standards at Redbrick should go up. In both kinds of university, though approaching the problem from different sides and though not aiming at identity between them, we have on the physical side to try in new ways to combine graciousness with simplicity of living.

That is easy to say but not easy to carry out. Suppose that in some projected hall of residence it is found that if there are single doors instead of double doors as in Cambridge colleges, or if there is a corridor instead of an entrance staircase plan, then more students can be rescued from the tram-ride introduction to sweetness and light, which kind of hall ought to be built? Suppose that two universities have to face the same problem and that each asks for the full cost to be met by the State, and one sends in a bigger bill for fewer people and the other a smaller bill for more people. No one ought to dictate what each should have, if they can provide for themselves; but if each bill has to be met from the common purse must there not be common fairness? Mr. Oakeshott can call that "planning" if he likes. But what would he do? Resign from the twentieth century?

### **The relation between social and educational change**

The reconsideration of university teaching in relation to social change is more difficult still; and general statements take nobody

very far. Here I would only give two or three examples of the kind of interplay that ought surely to be considered.

Nearly every one agrees that the overwhelming advantage offered by Oxford and Cambridge, and not offered in anything like the same degree by other universities, is personal contact between dons and undergraduates. The Oxford and Cambridge way may not be the only way in which this can be achieved, but nearly all great teaching has been through contact between persons, and in this Oxford and Cambridge at present have an immense advantage. There it has proved so good for undergraduates who have mostly come from homes where there was at least the opportunity for comfort, good talk, books and music and travel, that few who have experienced it would sacrifice it for anything. How much more desirable is it for those who come to the university without having had those advantages? In this matter democracy must have the aristocratic virtue of willingness to risk waste, for nothing else will serve. Mere expenditure will not give education, but the best education can never be had without expenditure and willingness to take a generous human risk. To put it prosaically, the ratio of teachers to students in the universities ought to be increased; and teachers should be found who enjoy teaching as well as research, and who have the time to teach well and in an unhurried atmosphere, and who will be freely available after formal teaching hours.

Consider another example. There has been much discussion about "general" and "special" education, but the plea for a more cultivated undergraduate has rarely been related closely enough to considerations of social change that are reflected in the student body. That the Greek and Latin classics were an admirable civilising instrument for those who could give the greater part of their school-time to them few would deny, but the social changes of our time have made that condition no longer anything like so operative. If we wish to open the humanities to the boy who has specialised heavily in the natural sciences, which on the whole is likely to do it more fruitfully—six months cramming of the rudiments of Latin, or a course of reading in the great works of imagination and discussion in the English language? Cambridge seems to have taken its recent decision because of the prestige that Latin derived from a social situation that is no longer there.

Take one further example. It has been said that the "State scholar," however well he may have done in his examinations, is

often less alive and enterprising than a boy from a different kind of school and home who has not accumulated quite so many marks on paper; and the inference is drawn that universities and colleges are right to prefer the latter in competition for scarce entrance places because he will make more of university life for himself and also give more to it. In this there is a short-view truth. But what is the explanation of the State scholar's dullness? That he has been over-driven and often under-fed, that he has not had either money in his own pocket or a sense that his father has money in the bank, that he has not had holidays abroad, that he has not had books and music at home. And what is the answer? To give him the chance to discover these things. It would be an excellent thing if when such scholarships were awarded, in advance of their being taken up, an additional extra sum could be given which would take the future freshmen to live and to learn a language abroad, or to do something equivalent at home. Then they might come up, not only more mature, but with a resilience that at present they can of course only rarely be expected to show.

### Conclusion

No one could possibly say that such considerations are not proper to a university or are likely to make it lose its sense of its own identity. They are mere examples of the wide-ranging modification of practice that we should consider if the universities are to do what they would wish to do in the Britain of this century. For the Britain of this century is more democratic than the Britain of last century and will surely be increasingly so. There may be less port, but this should not spoil its taste. And there is no reason at all why it should spoil the quality of the universities and what they can give. Indeed, with wisdom and with freedom from social prejudice, there is every reason why the universities should "be themselves" at least as fully in the future as they have been in the past. Both they and English democracy deserve it.



### III. THE UNIVERSITIES & SOCIAL PURPOSE

By Roy Pascal

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The ferment of thought about the universities, during and immediately after the war, was provoked by the threat to our national existence and institutions, and by our realization of the immense importance of the universities in the national life. Their practical contribution was great, not only in the sphere of technical achievement, but also in all branches of administration, of economic and political warfare. Studies normally considered to be "purely academic" suddenly uncovered a practical use. There was a clearer appreciation of the social value of university education in developing personal qualities of intelligence, initiative, and adaptability, and the universities' shortcomings in this respect were justifiably criticized.

At the same time, the war brought home a lesson of still wider bearing, that a nation and society can survive only if its members find in it a worthy social purpose, and are willing to devote themselves energetically to this purpose: a lesson as true, we know, in peace as in war. The universities were called upon to help to formulate this purpose and carry it to the mass of the people outside their walls. So the underlying principle of all the reports, articles and books on the universities in this period was to formulate the universities' responsibilities to society. The Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham University summed up this trend when he said: "If the nation fails to save its soul alive, we are so delicately poised on the see-saw of world economics and world politics that reputation, prosperity, employment and standard of living are likely to crash. . . . All our educational institutions have a decisive part to play in the attainment of the objective. . . . The universities must scoop into their net all in whom character and intellect are combined in greater than average degree. They must study to provide an environment in which their students can live the best possible and fullest community life. They must give a balanced education related directly to Man's history and destiny, to the environment in which he has to live, and to the ends and aims that alone make life worth while."<sup>1</sup>

Universities and Government have worked together towards the

<sup>1</sup> Presidential Address to the Union of Educational Institutions, December, 1945.

practical realization of these principles. As a result the tasks and problems of society are more directly mirrored in the universities than ever before; if there is a "crisis" in the world, then there must be a "crisis in the university". Sir Walter Moberly has done us a great service in posing the question thus, and one must meet him on his own ground. He has already been sharply challenged by Michael Oakeshott in his long review, and I wish to set out from these two interpretations.<sup>1</sup>

The technical and economic revolution of our time has brought, in Moberly's view, a complete breakdown of established values and convictions. The universities must accept their responsibilities to modern society—he finds no moral grounds for refusing to contribute in greater measure to the advancement of scientific knowledge and technical skills or the solution of social problems; and, in a more democratic age, the universities must be made available for social classes for whom they have, in the main, been out of reach. The universities have expanded but, in his view, have failed to respond to the spiritual needs of the times. They teach as if the world outside were still as secure, materially and spiritually, as it seemed to be fifty years ago; the traditional principles of research and education are out of contact with a society in crisis, and leave our students without guidance in a puzzling world. The universities must break through their limited departmentalistic purposes and give students through religion a consciousness of personal value and divine purpose.

I cannot here analyse the meaning of religion for Moberly. He does not discuss the question of the validity of his desire for a sense of super-mundane certainty. Sometimes he expresses it as a purely subjective feeling, and sometimes it appears in an ecclesiastical form, as order or humility or theology. In both forms it contrasts strangely with the liberal and humane spirit in which he outlines certain reforms he considers desirable; and at times he opens the door to a religious zealotry which would play havoc with the universities—as for instance when he approves Pusey on p. 265. The important thing is that, despite his advocacy of practical reforms with which most of us would agree, he appears inwardly unconvinced of their value, since his essential concern is the introduction of something totally different into university life, a new spirit, a new attitude, a belief: an ideology plastered on the top of alien

<sup>1</sup> *The Cambridge Journal*, June, 1949.

and incorrigible behaviour. During the war we were mainly concerned with the secular social and personal purpose of the university; here we find a transcendental objective. And this objective produces a distorted picture of the universities. The worse things appear, the more necessary seems the "metanoia" for which he calls. His description of students on p. 207, his statement that "many a student's life is dominated by Angst," his cursory condemnation of Arts Faculties on p. 184—they are well-nigh caricatures. Such distortions undermine the value of much of his criticism, which is frequently solid and pertinent. He fails, with his unique opportunity as former Chairman of the University Grants Committee, to give an adequate picture of the changes actually going on in the universities and of the spiritual and practical forces which *are* responding to the "needs of the times" and seeking to revitalize our university tradition.

Oakeshott<sup>1</sup> has drawn attention to the contradictions in Moberly's approach and to the resulting incoherence. He suggests—and in my opinion rightly—that the psychological distress postulated by Moberly is a distress felt not by a younger generation but by one cradled in the pseudo-certainties of Victorian England:

Was ihr den Geist der Zeiten nennt,  
Das ist im Grund der Herren eigner Geist,  
In dem die Zeiten sich bespiegeln.

But Oakeshott plunges us into an even deeper gulf. Shedding the religious or humanistic illusions of the religious or humane Moberly, he considers the present state of the world to be a chaos, in which all moral and cultural values are swallowed by "the plausible ethics of productivity". To save its soul the university must cut itself off as far as possible from the values ruling the world, it must hold fast to tried practices, and resist the insidious and overt attacks of the "men of power" with their principles of social welfare and efficiency. Planning is not a good; it indicates "our absence of direction and our loss of dependable habits of behaviour". The war can give us no inspiration; it was a period in which "laws were suspended and the balance of society disturbed". "The contemporary world offers no desirable model for a university." "The leaders of the rising class are consumed with a contempt for everything which does not spring from their own desires, they are

<sup>1</sup> *The Cambridge Journal*, June, 1949, p. 520.



convinced in advance that they have nothing to learn and everything to teach, and consequently their aim is loot."

In such a situation, the university can "preserve its identity" only by as radical a resistance to external influences as possible. Oakeshott's *Burkism* leads him to burke the issue.

Wo so ein Köpfchen keinen Ausgang sieht,  
Stellt er sich gleich das Ende vor.

Admitting reluctantly that the universities must reflect the world in which they exist, he stresses only the means by which they may shut out the external world as far as possible. Thus his account of the development of the universities in the past ignores the social sources of change and emphasizes only the discrimination exerted by the universities. Thus he can ridicule the concept of "social" justice and allow himself the extravagant statement that we all "know it to be an illusion that there was any large untapped reserve of men and women who could make use of this kind of university"—the increase of student numbers is seen only as a disturbance. Thus he would define the university purely formalistically as an "interim", a definition which tells us nothing about the content and character of studies, their origin and their social purpose. Moberly, he says, by accepting the principle of social responsibility must necessarily accelerate the disintegration of values and deepen a crisis which no ideology can overcome.

Both Moberly and Oakeshott, then, interpret the problem of the university in terms of a social development which in varying degrees they abhor. They join a vast body of opinion which watches with something akin to despair the rise to power of a social class which creates new demands and new standards. The rapid and violent development of society during the last four hundred years has led to a series of revolutions which have repeatedly provoked similar reactions in men attached to forms in which they were cradled. This is not the place to discuss this problem directly; the question is, is this diagnosis of a social cataclysm borne out by our experience in the universities, and by the perspective ahead?

No doubt the task of re-orientation is far more difficult for Oxford and Cambridge which (or rather, certain aspects of which) provide the background for Oakeshott's gloom, than for the modern universities, which have never shared in certain of their privileges. But it would be easy to make out a case, based on the experience

of the latter, to prove the beneficent results of the new times. In the past starved of funds, short of departments and staff, without adequate buildings, limited in the material bases of a healthy student life, these universities are now more in a position to fulfil the functions of a true university. The increase of student demand has, despite some drawbacks, given a real existence to some departments and allows many the power of selection of students. Full employment lessens the pressure of utilitarian considerations on our students; a larger staff has allowed us to develop more intimate and personal education. The association of "town" and "gown" informs us that outside, in the larger world, a high value is placed on the general ability and personality that we can encourage in our pupils. The contrast between a governing "élite" and a subordinate mass has become meaningless in our society; at all levels efficiency is needed combined with consciousness of social purpose and personal quality.

Do these and similar developments mean a distortion of the true purpose of a university, loss of its "identity"? The recent history of any university would, I am convinced, show that its growth has brought an enriching of the true university tradition. I am best acquainted with my own university and best acquainted with its shortcomings; I am sure it would stand a stern test. There has been a great development of departments, of research some of which is the direct outcome of technical or social problems. Are the principles of university life or study perverted or degraded by such work? Are the staff or students or syllabuses unfit? Consider the development of Extra-mural studies, of Physical Education, of the Institute of Education; examine (if you can) the mentality or temperament of the much increased student body. What different conclusions would be forced upon an investigator from those of Moberly, how totally unlike Oakeshott's assertions they would be! Consider the experiments being made in encouraging students to think and discuss matters outside their degree courses. Not that all is good or that amazing changes have been made; there is too, in Faculties and Senate, a great variety of opinion. But the atmosphere of such a university is totally different from that postulated by Moberly or Oakeshott; there is here vigorous life which, though it rarely finds general philosophical formulation, is a truer reflection of the opportunities and reality of our times than the anxieties of those who cling to old habits of mind. Take for

example the new University College of North Staffordshire, as direct a product of the time as can be found. In its novel form, in the shape of its curriculum, does it pervert the "identity" of the university? Or is it not rather a hopeful sign of the creativeness of a tradition which can find a new form appropriate to a particular setting and a new time?

The relationship of the university to the world is complex and the conditions governing this "interim" period are not the same as those governing men in their adult work. But this period is a preparation for later life, and must be fruitful in it. The consciousness of meaning, of value, can arise only if the life of its members (that is, their studies and their extra-curricular activities) is purposefully linked up with the society which it serves and fertilizes. This was the case in Oxford and Cambridge, and I suggest still is so, despite Oakeshott's interpretation; but if his attitude to the outside world were to prevail, the old academic spirit would not be preserved, it would lose all substance and vitality. Nor can meaning be injected from an extraneous source, if the actual forms of university life do not provide it. The religious feeling that Moberly advocates might become, in spite of his wishes, a dogmatic imposition at loggerheads with all intellectual and social practice, introduced out of political expediency; or, more probably, it would take the form of the savage and arrogant misanthropy of Kierkegaard, not a balm in Gilead but the symptom of acute distress.

I would maintain, then, that the new demands made on our universities, and the new opportunities given them, have given a new vitality to our academic tradition. In all cases, essential decisions have been in the hands of the universities themselves and they have been able to assure themselves that the fundamental conditions of academic work are preserved; if mistakes are made, they can be rectified in the same way. I agree, however, with Moberly that in many respects we shrink from consciously formulating our responsibilities, and because of this lag behind them. The urgency of these responsibilities can be measured only by the seriousness of the material and social crisis around us, and it is significant that both Moberly and Oakeshott do not plumb the depths of the crisis in Britain; we have the form of an empire without the power, we talk of social justice but rule colonial peoples, we live on credit, we cling to privileges and blind ourselves to their hollowness. The universities share the moral and material responsi-



bility for cutting through illusions and eliminating these contradictions; if they fail, our culture and our ethos will become a mockery. We should start by giving our students the opportunity of examining the social and philosophical bases of their studies, by encouraging them—and ourselves—to enquire into the *ratio* of each separate discipline. They should be encouraged to ask what is the social relevance of their work, even if the answer be, as it must, highly complex. No one would say that students in the highly vocational departments, such as Medicine or the Applied Sciences, are essentially different from those let us say in departments of English or History; but it is necessary to define the links between them, and to find a remedy for shortcomings in our syllabuses which at present are palliated only by the common foundations of student life. Experiments along such lines are going on, in the form of general courses or of new methods within specialist departments; we need information and criticism, which might be a suitable task for research in our Education Departments, which on the whole resolutely ignore university problems.

Our universities exist in a developing society which has shaped them, which they influence. If they are worth anything, they will play that active part in society which Moberly defines. If society is in turmoil and full of conflicts, our students must know about it. They must acquire at the universities that intellectual discipline which will enable them to discriminate; they should learn that no knowledge is without its presuppositions, without a social origin and a social relevance, so that they themselves will be morally prepared to apply what they have acquired in vigorous action in the social situation awaiting them. In their studies and their communal life they acquire the habit of personal effort and co-operation. These are principles and objectives already implicit in our universities; their urgency demands effort, but not dismay.

## IV. AN EXAMINATION OF INTELLECTUALISM

By A. E. Teale

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There are few people familiar with universities who can be content with the provision now made within them for a more general appreciation of the values on which a free society rests. It has long been of concern to most of us that while schools make some provision for the development of a sense of civic, as well as social and personal, responsibility in their pupils, and take special pride in the care taken for the training of character along with the encouragement of intellectual growth, university students are afforded no special facilities to enable them to acquire a deeper appreciation of, and a more deliberate adherence to, the values in which as children they have been reared.

### **The liberal tradition and its failure**

Hitherto reproaches on this score have been generally countered by the argument that any deficiency in this respect would be remedied by association with more experienced students—professors, lecturers, and tutors—and especially by membership of the various undergraduate societies in which discussion is free to range over the whole of human experience. It was thought by many to be the very mark of a liberal education, such as universities seek to provide, to leave undergraduates free to find their own values; and those who protested that something more than free inquiry and free discussion was needed for a balanced education were suspected of wishing to impose on undergraduates, under cover of the word “traditional”, their own interpretation of values and their own peculiar view of life.

Experience has shown, however, that a liberal education, as thus interpreted, is no sure aid to responsibility, and is no safeguard against that most insidious sophism that all values are subjective and relative to the culture pattern in which one is reared. It is precisely among university-trained people, and especially among those distinguished for their intellectual ability, that this doctrine abounds; and since argument rallies in vain against such a doctrine, and since those who accept it whole-heartedly feel no constraint of conscience in propagating it, they soon come into conflict with those

of a different opinion, and persuade themselves that where argument fails to convince, guile or force must needs be employed to determine which interpretation of value is to prevail in the educational field, as in all other spheres of social relationship.

As yet but few of those who acquiesce in this doctrine have been ready to push it to these extremes, and most of those who give credence to it whilst at the university lose faith in it or zeal for it when brought into contact with the realities of social life. But there can scarcely be any doubt that the doctrine is gaining ground, and is being canvassed in earnest by a good many university teachers; and if this is allowed to continue without challenge, the time may come when those of a different persuasion may be denied the liberty of protesting against it.

### **The humane studies of to-day have no answer**

It is not surprising, therefore, that those who can recognize in this doctrine the nemesis of a neglect to provide undergraduates with facilities for widening and deepening their appreciation of other values besides intellectual integrity should now be pressing for such facilities. What is surprising is that the suggestions so far mooted mistake a contributory influence for the main cause of our present malady. They mostly seem to aim at correcting excessive specialization in limited fields of inquiry (as though that were the main source of the trouble) by obliging all students to attend lectures outside prescribed courses, and especially those relating to the humanities. Yet it is very well known that it is not chemists, engineers, and doctors that are most affected by the disease, but psychologists, sociologists and philosophers; and to send students along to the latter for treatment is like sending a suspected case of phthisis to a chronic one for cure. The main cause of present disaffection lies, not in specialization as such, but in the disproportionate attention given to intellectual growth as compared with moral and æsthetic development, and in the lack of any special provision for a clarification of the values implied in intellectual achievement.

The trouble really begins in the schools. But it is greatly accelerated in the universities, where it should be alleviated. Despite the attention given to character training within the schools, pupils have much less scope for the exercise of their own judgment in matters relating to conduct than they have in matters relating to knowledge; and they are induced to conform to accepted standards



of conduct by a mixture of good example, sound advice, a little flattery, a touch of bribery, and the hand of authority. This conformity is not unwilling, but it is not as deliberate as it would be if it sprang from the pupil's own judgment; and this comes out at the university where external discipline is much reduced, where direct instruction is confined to intellectual training, and where students are left pretty much to themselves to find the moral encouragement and criticism they need. There the main, indeed for the great majority of students almost the sole, emphasis is upon intellectual development; and to further this students are subject to a process at once subversive of preconceived ideas and reconstructive by way of example of insight achieved by more advanced students working in the same field. Criticism and encouragement go hand in hand, and in this manner students are stirred to exercise and to rely upon their own judgment. The role of a teacher is to see that they proceed cautiously and critically, waiting upon data of their own finding, and checked by a criterion of evidence peculiar to the particular field of inquiry within which they are working. The kind of evidence which would satisfy a physicist would not satisfy a mathematician, any more than the kind of evidence which would satisfy a psychologist would satisfy a lawyer. In neither case is the criterion employed merely subjective, nor is it empirically determined. It is inherent in, and therefore common to, the judgment of those who are fully versed in the subject matter to which it relates.

### **Intellectualism and the special disciplines**

As such matters are more of concern to metaphysicians than to other specialist inquirers, they are seldom made plain to other students, who are then very apt to assume that evidence is all of one kind, namely, the kind to which they are accustomed. And when, under the stimulus of undergraduate discussion these students approach questions of conduct in this frame of mind, they find no evidence to warrant a belief in an absolute standard of conduct, and plenty of evidence to show that moral customs and beliefs vary from time to time and from one society to another. In this way is born the conviction that moral sentiments are relative to the culture pattern in which one is reared; and from this it is but a step to thinking that one's own experience of remorse or of obligation is of feelings wrought within us by the barrage of exhorta-

tion and admonition, innuendo and suggestion, to which we are subject from childhood onwards.

When the shock of this "discovery" (for such it must seem) has been alleviated by the delight new-found wisdom occasions, students thus emancipated are ready to question all beliefs, and to require for those deemed worthy of retention the same kind of evidence that would be required for a belief in—shall we say—an invisible star, a new virus, or another type of vitamin. Thus is born a fully fledged intellectual, that is, one who is ready to examine and discuss all statements of belief, and hence all assertions respecting values, with what he is pleased to regard as an open mind—though in actual fact his mind has already been closed, because of the kind of evidence it is prepared to accept, to everything upon which a vindication of values can depend.

If we wish to relieve society of irreconcilable difference of opinion concerning values, we must first find a remedy for intellectualism; for it is this, rather than excessive specialization, which stands in the way of an agreed educational policy.

### **Intellectualism cannot provide its own defence**

First, we must try to shake this attitude of mind by emphasizing an experience and by referring to a belief which no intellectual will disown, but for which no evidence of the kind he requires is forthcoming; for until this is done, any attempt to correct the mischief at its source may be stigmatized as dogmatism parading as enlightened benevolence. It can best be done by allowing an intellectual to speak for himself, and no better example of this manner of thinking can be found than that afforded by Mill's *Essay on Liberty*. In the chapter in which Mill pleads so eloquently for the fullest liberty of thought and discussion, on the ground that "the beliefs we have most warrant for have no safeguards to rest on, but a standing invitation to the whole world to prove them unfounded", there is a footnote which runs as follows: "If the arguments of the present chapter are of any validity, there ought to exist the fullest liberty of professing and discussing, as a matter of ethical conviction, any doctrine however immoral it may be considered".

This obligation—for such in fact is what Mill is urging—would be as pointless to a sceptic as it is extremely dubious to any morally-minded person, but to an intellectual there is nothing even paradoxical about it; for from his point of view "complete liberty of

contradicting and disproving our opinion is the very condition which justified us in assuming its truth for the purpose of action, and on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of being right". Hence Mill claims that "on every subject on which difference of opinion is possible, the truth depends on a balance to be struck between two sets of conflicting reasons . . . . He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side, if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion. The rational position for him would be suspension of judgment". Nor is it enough, says Mill, that he should hear the arguments of adversaries from his own teachers. He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form; and "so essential is this discipline to a real understanding of moral and human subjects, that if opponents of all important truths do not exist, it is indispensable to imagine them, and supply them with the strongest arguments which the most skilful devil's advocates can conjure up."

Observe how thoroughly Mill would prepare us all for the exercise of an enlightened and disciplined judgment. His zeal for intellectual integrity is unrivalled: and if anyone thus trained had any beliefs at all, he would at least know why he held them. If, however, teachers were thus confined to securing strict impartiality and scrupulous fairness in regard to all opinions and beliefs, the only belief a student would have would be in intellectual integrity. That is precisely what we do find in intellectuals.

### **Moral judgment educated only by practice in use**

Now the strength of this position lies in the corrigibility of all human judgments. Its weakness lies in the suggestion that argument and discussion will provide all the criticism and correction that judgment may need; for this is precisely what no artist, scientist, or moral man would ever admit. There are few poets or musicians, few scientists or philosophers, who would not submit their work to the criticism of those similarly informed. But no poet or musician, no scientist or philosopher would ever suppose that external criticism could ever do more than reveal weaknesses in judgment; it could not in any way forward creative judgment itself. Nor would any of these be deterred from exercising his skill by the fear of being



wrong in his judgment. He would know that the only way of achieving success in either field is to let judgment express itself practically, and through its expressions correct its own errors and so find pointers to new and more fruitful developments. Not by argument and discussion, not by impartial scrutiny and strict examination of other people's judgments does one's own judgment grow, but only by its own exercise; and in this it needs to be encouraged, not so much by exhortation and admonition, but by examples of regular judgments drawn from the field in which it is to operate, so as to enable it to find for itself the proper medium for its own precise expression.

So it is with the moral judgment. This Mill (and all who follow him) would have discovered if he had but attended more closely to the two obligations which he urges upon us at the beginning and end of this argument, *viz.*, intellectual fairness and intellectual thoroughness. For these obligations—like all other obligations—are not appreciated by everyone, nor can they be made apparent to anyone by argument and discussion. There is no evidence that any man is, or has been, absolutely fair and absolutely sincere; and no reason can be given (least of all a utilitarian one) why any man should forsake normal prudence in order to be scrupulously fair and utterly sincere. Yet, in common with all men of enlightened conscience, there is no intellectual who does not in fact recognize an obligation to strain after something which he knows to be ideal, *viz.*, intellectual integrity; and none who does not feel that duplicity, chicanery and deceit are unworthy of anyone who has even glimpsed this ideal.

Here is a belief which underlies all argument and discussion. Yet no intellectual would admit it to be purely emotional in origin or merely relative to the culture pattern in which one has been reared, even though the evidence for it lies only in judgment itself. Here is a belief which cannot be imposed upon judgment either by direct instruction or by the most subtle process of innuendo and suggestion; and if we wish an undergraduate to believe only what is thus believable we must provide him with opportunities, not for argument and discussion, but for the exercise of his own moral and æsthetic judgment.

## V. SOCRATES AND THE PROFESSORS

By John Morrison

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### I

“Jack, you’re a philosopher, and that’s worse than anything.”

“But come,” said Jack, rising, “we are wasting our time *talking* instead of *doing*.”

R. M. Ballantyne, *The Coral Island*.

The preference, even among the reflective, for *doing* rather than *talking*, for practice rather than theory, is perhaps a human, and certainly a British, characteristic. It enables us to continue an activity in the face of theoretical divergences which, on a rational view, should bring it to a stop. Such an ability in most practical matters is a valuable asset, but occasionally the doer must stop and consider his first principles, faced by the absolute necessity of choice between alternative paths of progress. The plain symptom of this necessity is indecision: it becomes only too obvious that the practitioners are at a loss. In the university at the present time such symptoms are generally recognized. There is an enormous opportunity for *doing*: expansion, in response to a demand for technicians, is universal. But there is an air of hesitancy, and a feeling that the theoretical basis of expansion is not altogether sound. This diagnosis may be merely a personal view, but if it is correct there is at this juncture a case for overcoming natural prejudice against theoretical analysis, even if the result is only a sharpening of differences.

Ancient Greece is the place to go for first principles. Not only do the Greeks have the advantage of standing at the source of the western tradition, but they were by natural gift addicted to abstract thinking. Their political practice provides a good example. No permanent figurehead is required to personify the state, but they rely cheerfully and confidently on the abstract conception of the *polis*. Further, what we should call university education, the instruction of young men after leaving school, happens to be the main preoccupation of one of their greatest thinkers, Socrates, and of his supremely gifted pupil, Plato. It is, therefore, comparatively easy to bring the Greeks to our aid; and I write this article not because I believe that the views of Plato and Socrates have only to be stated to be accepted, but because they put the choice before us

in a particularly clear light. I shall present, for discussion, the analysis of the aims of university education contained in the opening paragraphs of the dialogue which Plato named after Protagoras, the foremost public teacher of fifth-century Athens. But before doing that it will be necessary to make a few observations on the dialogue itself, and on the background of thought in which it is set.

## II

The name of Plato, introduced in these days into an argument, normally has a prejudicial effect. His views are discounted as of a reactionary in politics and education. In the *Protagoras*, which exhibits his dramatic and literary skill more than anything else, and is possibly his earliest work, we have to do not with the educational and political programme of the *Republic* or the *Laws* but with the views on education which Socrates had developed out of his criticism of his contemporaries. The theories of the *Republic* and *Laws* were deliberately anti-democratic, and had in view the behaviour of the Athenian democracy towards the end of the fifth century and the theories developed by the counter-revolutionary movements; but the *Protagoras* depicts the relations of Socrates with the leading exponents of higher education in that great formative period of Attic civilization before it was assailed by the moral, physical and economic weaknesses consequent upon the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. Protagoras, it is true, in his political writing and teaching, seems to have been the friend and *protégé* of Pericles and to have provided a theoretical backing for the Periclean form of democracy; and Socrates is plainly critical of the democracy and of the Periclean leadership. But Socrates remained loyal to the democracy even when it condemned him to death. His argument with Protagoras, whom he treats with marked respect, does not arise from a fundamental political difference: and his arguments deserve accordingly to be treated on their merits.

In the dialogue Protagoras, Prodicus and Hippias represent the contemporary exponents of wisdom, while Socrates plays the part of the man who really knows their business better than they, of the real wise man. If we ask what is the business of all of them, we find it easy to give examples, hard to frame a definition. It is perhaps to give the young as they enter man's estate the knowledge necessary for a firm grasp on life in the world, just what, in fact, we might call a university education. The lectures of men like



Protagoras certainly mark, in an informal way, the beginnings of the university. They led directly to the rhetorical schools of the fourth century of which the most famous was that of Socrates: indirectly, by way of Socrates' criticism, to Plato's Academy, the first formal institution for the pursuit of research and teaching, which through the Museum and Library of Alexandria is the ancestor of our universities. The dialogue is likely to have been a reasonably accurate account of the clash between Socrates and the public teachers in the third quarter of the fifth century; but Plato undoubtedly wrote it as a criticism of their descendants in the fourth, and as a proclamation of views on which his own Academy was to be based. If these are the views which lie at the root of our university tradition, it is all the more suitable to compare them with our own.

The public recitation of the poet in early society is, I suppose, the first form of higher education. His repertory has been shown customarily to embrace traditional wisdom in all its departments: theology, cosmology and weather-lore, history and geography, ethical and political wisdom. As culture develops, the functions of a Hesiod become specialised in an increasing number of publicly recognized vocations. The invention of writing substituted the book for the poetic repertory, but the habit of re-editing the sum of traditional knowledge and producing it as one's own continued (*e.g.*, The Hippocratic Corpus and the Elements of Euclid): and by the fifth century at Athens the process of instruction had developed from the poetic recitation of traditional wisdom to lectures and courses by specialized teachers. The subjects alone remained very much the same as before.

In two important aspects the public teacher of the fifth century diverged from his poetic ancestor: and both these divergences are the objects of Socrates' criticism. The first is economic. The poet's means of support had varied according to the section of society for which he sang. In Heroic society the poet has always, in Greece and elsewhere, found an honourable place in the king's household. A Hesiod was an independent farmer whose poetic gift was rewarded by the prizes at public contests, just as the tragic or comic writers were rewarded at Athens in the fifth century. These latter poets were true "singers of the people." The public teachers at Athens, on the other hand, charged high fees for their services. Socrates, emphasizing the difference between him and them before the jury that sentenced him to death asserts that he never took pupils

or charged a fee, because, if he had, he could have exercised his divine vocation only upon the rich. This reason, taken in conjunction with his half-serious suggestion that the Athenians should repay his services to them all with free meals in the public dining room, suggests that Socrates saw, what we can see in the perspective of history, that the public teachers by charging fees had declined from the high estate of public educator and were not, in fact, public teachers at all. Socrates' point appears to be, not that the teacher should teach free, but that he should not sell himself to one section of the community when his vocation lay with the community at large. Xenophanes, a good example of the old kind of poetic teacher, had similarly asserted that he had a better claim to a place on the Civil List than a mere athlete; for an athlete did not make rich the city's storehouses or promote domestic peace and stability.

Another innovation in the higher education of the fifth century in Athens was probably the teaching of the art of speech. Eloquence in early society on the lips whether of king or poet is a sign of divine inspiration. The personification of Persuasion as a deity is evidence of early realization of its power over men's lives; and in Aeschylus this power appears as a sinister and irresistible force. In fact, the chief weapon by which Pericles and Ephialtes disposed of their rivals and introduced the full democracy was impeachment before mass juries. As a writer in the middle of the fifth century observed, victory in a law court depends not on justice but on the spoken word. In such circumstances, when the ability to make a convincing defence might constitute a man's only security, teachers naturally catered for the urgent demand and gave instruction in speaking. But, by demanding high fees, they put into the hands of the well-to-do an instrument of political power and a method of regaining that influence on public affairs which they had lost on the advent of democracy. The teaching of rhetoric thus became, after Pericles' death, associated with the anti-democratic movement. It is not surprising that we should find them often preoccupied with the problem how their pupils could avoid the popular suspicion which naturally fell on "higher education". Plato represents Socrates in many of his dialogues as criticising the teaching of rhetoric. The true educator should not teach *how* to speak, but *what* to speak.

In general, it may be said that in his criticism of the public teachers Socrates was conscious that they were perverting the true profession of education. Instead of instructing all the young men in



the traditional wisdom and ethical standards of the community, they were concentrating on a small class and putting into their hands a weapon for the advancement and protection of their own interests. The positive conception of the duty of the educator in contemporary Athens is brought into sharp focus by the opening chapters (309a-314c) of the *Protagoras* to which we may now proceed.<sup>1</sup>

### III

Socrates tells a friend of his that he has just come from a conversation with Protagoras, "the wisest of our generation". The friend is anxious to have an account of it: and Socrates begins his tale.

In the small hours of the morning a young friend named Hippocrates (whom we learn later to be of a great and wealthy family) had knocked him up. It was because, getting back late the previous night, he had heard from his brother that Protagoras had come to town. He was very excited, and after a brief sleep had come along to Socrates to get an introduction to the teacher: "for you know that everyone praises the man and says that he is a past master of speaking". Socrates points out that, as it is still dark, perhaps it is rather early to go calling on Callias where Protagoras is staying; so he and Hippocrates take a walk in the court and talk. Socrates does not lose the opportunity of putting Hippocrates' enthusiasm to the test and asking him a few questions.

What, he asks, was Hippocrates' object in taking paid lessons from Protagoras? If he was taking lessons with his namesake the doctor, it would, presumably, have been so as to become a doctor. Protagoras is a *sophistes*. Is his object, then, to become a *sophistes*? Hippocrates blushes (it is now becoming light)! "In heaven's name," says Socrates, "would you not be ashamed to present yourself before the Greeks as a *sophistes*?" "Yes, I should indeed," Hippocrates replies, "if I am to say what I really think".

Socrates has isolated one form of instruction a young man might

<sup>1</sup> I have deliberately avoided calling Protagoras and his colleagues "sophists". This name they certainly owned in Greek, but Plato's criticism of them has led to an English usage which makes the employment of the English word extremely deceptive. It has been shown that the Greek noun *sophistes* means primarily an exponent of *sophia*, wisdom; and that those of whom it was used, throughout the history of Greek civilizations were the recognized educators; poets, musicians, men who explored the nature of the world in its various aspects. Coloured, therefore, as it is for us by the Platonic criticism, the word is unsuitable to describe the exponents of wisdom before Plato.



pay to get; he now turns to another. Perhaps, he suggests, this was not the sort of instruction you expected to get from Protagoras, but you expected rather the kind you got as a boy at school. You didn't learn your lessons then with a profession in view, so as to become a doctor or sculptor or teacher, but with a view to an education "as befits a man of freedom and independence (*ὡς τὸν ἰδιώτην καὶ τὸν ἐλεύθερον πρέπει*).” Hippocrates agrees that this second kind of instruction was what he expected.

If that is the case, says Socrates, I hope you know what you are doing. You are handing over your soul for treatment to somebody you don't know anything about. Hippocrates defines a *sophistes*, by a popular etymology, as someone who "knows wise things"; and suggests that these wise things consist in the art of making people clever at speaking. But when Socrates presses him to say what Protagoras makes people clever at speaking *about*, he is at a loss. Socrates emphasizes how strange it is to want to entrust your soul to someone you know so little about, without taking advice from family or friends. In his opinion, the public teachers are like merchants or dealers in provisions. Neither the merchants nor the purchasers, unless they happen to be trainers or doctors, know what is good or bad for the body. In just the same way the public teachers sell their wares to any odd purchaser. They don't know what is good or bad for the soul, and the purchasers don't either, "unless one happens to be a doctor of the soul". And there is, Socrates asserts, a far greater risk in buying learning than in buying food, because you can take your food home and get advice before eating it, but learning must be consumed on the spot, and taken into your very soul. So, with the warning that we must be very careful and take advice from our elders before entrusting ourselves to the public teachers, Socrates takes Hippocrates off to meet Protagoras, Prodicus and Hippias; and Hippocrates, and the reader, is given an opportunity of judging them for himself.

#### IV

The first observation to make with regard to this analysis is that Socrates takes it for granted that school education is non-professional: an assumption which is not always made by us. Higher education for him begins after fourteen, with us about four years later. This discrepancy does not destroy the analogy, because in the Mediterranean climate physical and mental maturity is reached

earlier, and, in addition, economic causes make us delay as long as possible the attainment of man's estate.

Socrates' attitude to higher education falls into two complementary parts:—

(1) In the first place he distinguishes sharply between technical training and education. The latter, which is of the same nature as schooling (*i.e.*, a general preparation for life), alone befits the man of freedom and independence.

(2) In the second, he believes that education is concerned with the "nourishment of the soul". The public teachers on the other hand merely retail knowledge without considering or knowing whether it is good or bad for the soul; and, in fact, the rhetorical training in which they specialize is morally worthless. There are, however, people who are "doctors of the soul", who know what is good or bad for it (and these presumably are the real educators, nourishing the soul with their teaching).

The two aspects may be discussed in order.

(1) Socrates' distinction between technical training and education needs a little explanation. The schooling of the Greek boy was not standardized or free; but a "law of Solon" exhorted all parents to send their sons to a schoolmaster, and it appears that most did so, though there was considerable difference in fees and hence in standards between the different schools. The curriculum consisted of physical and musical training, reading and writing, acquaintance with the poets, and, in some of the better schools at least, mathematics and contemporary theories of physics. Such elementary instruction was the preparation for life which all, or practically all, citizens of Athens were given as free and independent individuals, members of the community of the *polis*. After the age of fourteen the greater number of the citizens lost their independence in the sense that economic necessity drove them to learn a profession. A few, whose fathers were able to afford it, continued their education and pursued the school subjects further (*cf. Protagoras* 318e: arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music) or studied the art of speaking. The reason for Hippocrates' blushes, when it is suggested that he is studying to become a professor, is all too plain. Hippocrates belongs to a great and wealthy family: it would be beneath him to follow a profession. If he is to say what he thinks, and Socrates leaves him no alternative, he must show himself a snob. And

Socrates himself is the son of a sculptor, and is undoubtedly regarded as a professional exponent of wisdom.

There can, I think, be no doubt that the distinction between general education and technical training is a valid and important one, and deserves sharper emphasis in our universities. Should we proceed further and reject Hippocrates' preference for general education as mere snobbishness, and adopt technical and professional training as our aims? This is in fact the attitude which is turning universities into polytechnics for the production of lawyers and school teachers, applied scientists and engineers, doctors and dentists. Before this attitude is adopted, Socrates' point should be considered, that higher general *education* depends on economic freedom, which our society aims at giving to all. Such education is not to be rejected as undesirable just because the rich alone have been able to afford it. This fact, indeed, shows that it is desirable for the individual. But, in a society such as ours where, in theory, all who can profit from a university may attend one, that is not enough; it must be shown that a high standard of general education is desirable from the point of view of the community. Most people would, I believe, agree that it was desirable that those people who could profit from higher general education would benefit the community by having it; but some might add shortsightedly, that this is a luxury which Britain at this moment in her history can hardly afford, and some might point out that it is only by chance at the present time that students do acquire a good general education at our universities. For, students, economically free in one sense, are not free in the sense that they can acquire the education they desire irrespective of the profession they will have to follow afterwards. Some few professions, fortunately, require a high standard of general education, and some others, *e.g.*, teaching, require a knowledge of some of the subjects which constitute a good general education. The great majority of "honours" courses are narrowly specialized with the object of providing experts for professional purposes.

Should we then banish technical training and specialization from the university and concentrate on general education? The question only becomes a practical one if the student gains real economic freedom by the recognition among a much larger range of professions that an education designed to make a man or woman a full member of the community is also the best possible professional qualification. Plato himself did not argue, as Harold Nicolson recently, that the



chief merit of a good education is that it is useful for *nothing*. The philosophic rulers of the *Republic* turned from the contemplation of the sum of Being back to the shadows of the cave. Their education was technical training, but only in the highest possible sense: to make them good citizens and good rulers. In the absence of the requirements of technical specialization a real general education could be devised wide enough to admit variations of interest and talent, but narrow enough to create a unity of culture. With this proviso and in this hope the answer to the second question might well be "yes." The main objection would arise in planning the syllabus from those who believe that the student knows what is good for himself better than the teacher—the latter day doctrine of original virtue. In considering this objection we pass to the second part of Socrates' theory.

(2) Socrates believes that the educator is concerned with the human personality as the doctor or trainer is concerned with the body; and that a good educator will know what is good for the human personality just as the doctor or trainer knows what is good for the body. Most modern university teachers would say that they were merely concerned with presenting their chosen corner of their subject to such students as happened to want to learn about it. Socrates undoubtedly would have called them mere merchants of learning; and have reserved the name of educator for those who feel that it is their business to know what is good or bad for their pupils and plan their studies accordingly. If Socrates' challenge is accepted, the university could reassume the responsibility, which since the collapse of the Christian ideal of education it has progressively declined, of directing the student's pursuits for the welfare of his whole moral being. This responsibility accepted, the concept of higher general education as opposed to technical and professional training, would begin to have some meaning, not only in the minds of those at the university, but in the community at large, upon whose judgment of the value of its products the future of the university entirely depends.

## VI. AIMS AND METHODS

By John Adams

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The controversy about the nature, functions, and duties of the universities, which has been intensified in the last few years, seems to revolve around three main issues. Is the university primarily concerned with teaching and the transmission of culture, or with the advancement of knowledge, or with both? Should the university be devoted to general education or to specializations, and what disciplines are proper to it? And what stand is the university to take on moral, religious, and ideological issues?

These three questions cannot in the last resort be separated. If the university's primary aim is the transmission of culture in Señor Ortega's sense, then it must devote itself to general education and must concern itself with moral issues. For in Ortega's definition "culture is the vital system of ideas of a period";<sup>1</sup> and that is not something which can be studied within the confines of one or even several specialisms, and is not something which can omit moral, religious, and ideological issues. In the sense, however, that these questions all look at the same problem, from different angles, it may be permissible to consider them separately.

### Teaching and research

Newman held that a university "is a place of teaching universal knowledge. This implies that its object is, on the one hand, intellectual and not moral; and, on the other, that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement. If its object were scientific and philosophical discovery, I do not see why a university should have students, if religious training, I do not see how it can be the seat of literature and science."<sup>2</sup> Señor Ortega sees the main function of the university to be the transmission of culture, not in the sense of "an ornament for the mind or a training of character," but in the sense of the "system of ideas concerning the world and humanity" possessed by men of an era and forming the repertory of convictions which become the effective guide of existence. It should be added that Señor Ortega qualifies this description by pointing out later that, though the university

<sup>1</sup> Ortega y Gasset, *The Mission of the University*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Idea of a University*, p. ix.

"cannot be composed of science—the unrestricted creation of exact knowledge—it requires the spirit of science to animate its institutional life". Although the "central portion of the university" must not be confused "with the zone of research surrounding its borders," there will be constant going and coming "between the university and these outlying camps of the sciences".<sup>1</sup> Something of the same point of view seems to be contained in current American thought which distinguishes between the college whose function is teaching and the university which is concerned with the advancement of knowledge, though the larger universities include both functions with varying degrees of integration. The mysterious Mr. Bruce Truscot, on the other hand, while envisaging teaching and research going hand in hand with a twofold aim, emphasizes that "there could perfectly well be a university which had no undergraduates. . . . But there could never be a university which had no researchers at all and which engaged in nothing but teaching".<sup>2</sup>

### **The University and the Community**

The university must be considered in the framework of the society of which it is a part. The character of the university in a society which aims to be liberal and democratic cannot but be different, as recent events have shown, from one in a society which is based on a political orthodoxy. It is part of the faith of liberalism—never better expressed than in J. S. Mill's essay *On Liberty*—that progress is made by free discussion and experiment. This is also the doctrine of the natural sciences. It has been criticized as involving "neutrality"—a term which superficially appears negative. But it is negative only in the sense that it refuses to assent to enforced domination of the mind or spirit by a dogma of whatever origin. The scientist is not even neutral when making his investigations. He aims to let the facts—or his observations—speak for themselves. But they speak in answer to a hypothesis which he has put forward. As Mr. Arnold Nash and President Conant have emphasized,<sup>3</sup> the investigations of science are also all based on large and important presuppositions of a positive kind. Still less negative is that determination to listen to all available evidence and contention, which is sometimes described as "having an open mind". We have,

<sup>1</sup> *Mission of the University*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Red Brick University*, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *The University and the Modern World*, p. 79.  
*Education in a Divided World*, p. 176.



perhaps, tended to take this point of view for granted, as for several generations in England at least there has been comparatively little challenge to the idea—however much we may have fallen away from it in practice. The claim of political systems to impose a dogma on every part of the community is now making it evident that the liberal democratic point of view requires positive assertion and positive action to see that it is preserved. But what must also be stressed is that this point of view does not mean the adoption of an attitude of cynical criticism, which is irresponsible because it involves being committed to nothing. And it does recognize that there are some matters—and among them the most important—which ultimately depend on faith.

The reasons for this point of view are not to be argued here. Suffice it to say that in the history of communities and universities domination by dogma has resulted in stultification and produced cleavages which could only be resolved by drastic actions. For a society which aims to be liberal and democratic Mill's principle must be accepted as a starting point. There must then be in the community some organ intimately associated with all the more important forms of knowledge and thought in their most fully developed expression; some group or groups, which are probing further, refining and revising what already appears established, and so, by a process which is truly dialectical, establishing new truth, new concepts, and, where it is appropriate, new faith. If this is not the function of the university, to what other group does it belong? If the university did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it.

How does this conception of the place of the university in the community affect the relationship of teaching and research? Clearly no group can be intimately associated with knowledge and thought in their most fully developed expression, unless it is itself directly participating in the advancement of knowledge and thought by the different modes which are appropriate to the various types of study. As Señor Ortega himself emphasizes, "An atmosphere charged with enthusiasm, the exertion of science, is the presupposition at the base of the university's existence."<sup>1</sup> And the same may be said for those disciplines which are not normally included under the title of science. Herein also lies one of the main differences between the university and the school as it affects the undergraduate. At school, for the most part, he has been accustomed to accept what has been given

<sup>1</sup> *Mission of the University*, p. 75.

to him, to memorize it and to give an answer which will reflect what he has been told and has read. This is to a large extent inevitable and not undesirable under school conditions, though no doubt it is less true of some schools than of others and of the higher forms than of the lower. But is it not of the essence of university learning that the undergraduate should develop that inquisitiveness of mind, which we hope has already been aroused in school, so that he will form his own judgments on fundamental evidence and be content with nothing less? Here, in embryo, is the process of mind which will make a scholar or scientist. Though most of the achievements of the undergraduate may be subjective, if he has made his knowledge his own by probing down to bedrock, he has put his knowledge and his judgment on a different plane from that which he achieved at school; he has acquired a discipline of enquiry and judgment which will fit him—if he has that particular kind of ability—to be a scholar or scientist in his own right, or to tackle problems of a different kind, if he goes into the world of affairs. The first degree stage is one of transition, which cannot easily or effectively be guided by any but those who have themselves a concern for and experience in the advancement of knowledge and thought.

### **Specialization**

In the limited period available for the first degree, how can such a transition be achieved without specialization? If the jibe at specialization is that ultimately it means knowing everything about nothing, the equally absurd retort can be made that general education means knowing nothing about everything. Specialization is inevitable. In some cases there ought to be more of it than there is. Minds are not broadened by adding subjects which are regarded by the undergraduate as obstacles to be circumvented with as much cunning as possible. The dangers of specialization are only too obvious and have been frequently described. But are they not due to a wrong handling of specialization? It sometimes seems that the modern universities in particular try to turn out a finished article at the first degree stage. The undergraduate, in consequence, is led to imagine that he will go out into the world as a fully fledged chemist, engineer, or historian, and it is only when he gets away and starts to ply his trade that he realizes that he has to rebuild his house almost from the foundation and that what counts is whether at the university he has learned a real discipline of enquiry and

judgment. The Oxford "Greats" discipline is highly specialized, and its core is strictly limited, though the range of interests which can be developed from it is almost infinite. We have, as Señor Ortega has said, to consider what can be learned as well as what can be taught. But the tendency of at least some of the courses in the modern universities seems to be to demand too much over too wide a field, even though that field is specialized in one subject or allied group of subjects. Quality of work suffers and the undergraduate feels that he cannot allow himself what appears to him the luxury of roaming outside his prescribed work. Is not the answer to the dangers of specialization, not to make the scientist read philosophy, but to encourage him to be more philosophic about his science; not to make the historian study the grammar of science, as Mr. James has termed it, but to stimulate him to examine the main ideas, achievements and methods of science in their effect upon history? It would seem to be at this point that the research man, if he is myopic, may fail as a teacher and that undue attention to mere productivity in research in making appointments and promotions may cause the university to fall short in its difficult double task. It is not merely a research institute and must resist the temptation to become one.

### **Corporate life**

The comparative lack of corporate life in non-residential universities, which applies both to staff and to students and to the relations between them, is a serious barrier to the mutual exchange of ideas which is a stimulus to a more philosophic—in the non-technical sense of that term—consideration of our separate specialisms. Its mission requires that the university be a corporate society in the fullest sense. But how can it be, when its members live scattered widely over a large city and perhaps even further afield. It is here that the residential halls have a vital contribution to make to the life and thought of the modern university, if they make the most of their opportunities. There is sufficient experience from existing halls—small in number and short in history as most of them are—to warrant that these are not idle hopes. But increase in residential facilities is not in itself sufficient. If the demands of the prescribed syllabus are such that there is no time and energy left for anything else, if the undergraduate is not stimulated in class or tutorial to explore the wider implications of his main effort of



study, the opportunities which can be provided by the residential community will lie unused.

### **Professions and technologies**

From earliest times training for professional skills has been a characteristic function of the universities. The increasing influence of the professions and technologies in the modern world underlines the importance of this side of the university, if it is to play the part in the life of the community which has been indicated. The men preparing for the professions and for technical work are likely to be a high proportion of those who, in a generation or two, will be leaders in local and national life, when they will be called upon to exercise an influence extending far beyond their technical proficiencies. Yet it is these subjects which tend to make the most exclusive demands on the time of their students and where the process of study may most easily be reduced to a drill. But who is to say that the scientific study of materials, construction techniques, or forms of propulsion is not an important and worthy part of our culture? Is it not the duty of the university to promote such work and to provide facilities for undergraduates to enter upon it, provided that the social importance of the technology be established and that the discipline is such that the undergraduate is not given a mere technical drill, but is stimulated to think and inquire on logical scientific lines and to see the wider bearings of his study. The study of materials, or of engineering construction and design invite consideration of problems of æsthetics as well as technology and are hardly complete without some attention to past use and practice, which may be a window on to history. The social repercussions of applied science can challenge the inquiring mind to reflect on problems of sociology and economics. Too seldom, it would seem, is the discipline of expressing himself in writing with clarity, logic, and elegance, required of the student in the sciences and technologies. This, valuable in itself, may also lead to an appreciation of the values of language and even of literature. But, approached through the broader aspects of the undergraduate's special interest, these other spheres of thought and knowledge may evoke a more genuine response than if it appears that they are just something added on to an already heavy programme.

### **Moral, religious, and ideological issues**

But it is for its failure to concern itself with moral, religious,

and ideological issues that Sir Walter Moberly has recently brought the university under the heaviest fire. Clearly, if it is to fulfil its function of being a real intellectual power house, it would fail from the start if it did not wrestle with these problems, which are the most fundamental for the lives of individuals and the community. But it must remain an open shop. The virtues which it is right to expect in university teachers, researchers, or students, one would expect to find in a high degree in Christians. But they are not solely Christian virtues. Many of those which are enjoined in the last chapter of *The Crisis in the University* are upheld and practised no less conscientiously by our colleagues who claim to be agnostics or humanists. Indeed the humanist point of view receives somewhat scant treatment in the earlier sections of the book, where it is equated with classical humanism, which it is suggested is outdated, or with scientific humanism, which is implied to be necessarily Marxist. The Christian faith itself may lose its vitality, as it has done for periods in the past, if it is not exposed to the ordeal of criticism from without as well as from within. Not can the increased co-operation between different sections of the Christian church entirely obscure the difficulty which many sincere Christians have in accepting the faith in the form in which it is believed by others. Have not the by no means negligible body of persons who find the greatest satisfaction in the Christian ethic, but great difficulties in theology—not always from want of consideration—unenlightened though they may be, a part to play in the university?

But where we do seem to fail is that consideration of many of these vital questions goes by default. The staff seldom discuss them among themselves and the undergraduate is left largely to his own devices, though assisted by devoted efforts on the part of the student Christian societies. This need is not to be solved in terms of appointments or of bricks and mortar, not by the lightening and leavening of the prescribed curriculum, nor even by the concentration of the university's teaching on "the vital system of ideas of a period." But it would seem that, in addition to reviewing its curriculum and seeking to give itself a more corporate existence, the modern university might with the co-operation of the churches establish within itself not only places of worship and religious enlightenment, but also men with the perhaps rather special ability of presenting their faith to a section of the community which is trained to be critical. To do so would provide a focus, which is at

present lacking and which cannot effectively be provided by "lay theologians." Of itself the university cannot do this. It may and should provide the setting. It may, if occasion arises, have to consider how far consistently with its purpose it can tolerate within its borders those whose only aim is to indoctrinate or to destroy for some ulterior end which justifies any means. But it must see that moral, religious, and ideological issues are not passed by on the other side, either in its teaching or in the ferment of informal discussion which should surround it.

### **The world outside**

So far the mission of the university has been considered primarily from the point of view of its internal life and work. But if it is to fulfil its mission it has important duties to groups which are outside its walls. That it must be in touch with the great amount of research and creative work, which is initiated by individuals and groups which are not part of it, should go without saying. That in the past scientific discoveries and original thought have in no small degree emanated from men who had no immediate connection with a university, has often been emphasized. The process continues. But how far does the university bring home to those who pass through it a sense of duty to the community—more than ever necessary in a would-be planned society? How far do the graduates, of the modern university in particular, look to their old university as a continuing source of inspiration? How far is the civic university an inspiration to the communities in its own region, not only by its adult education or by the contacts of its applied science departments with local industry; but by its close liaison with the schools, by its support of local music, art, architecture, archæology, youth work, and social service; by the beauty and originality of its buildings; by the lead which it takes in the study and understanding of local and regional social and economic problems. All these involve co-operation, which implies that both partners are willing. Do we do our part to see that at least one of them shares the sentiments of Barkis?



## VII. WORK AND THE UNIVERSITIES

By D. J. Davies

*Magdalen College, Oxford, 1945-9*

My own interest in the problem of the present "crisis" is derived from my disillusionment with Oxford when I finally went up after three and a half years in the Army, during which Oxford had stood for everything that was worthwhile and hopeful in life. It was not merely that Oxford fell short of an impossible day-dream, or that post-war Oxford was a "utility" version of its peace-time quality. The true causes of my disillusionment lay deeper, and gradually I came to believe that it stemmed from intrinsic faults in the university system itself. Discussions with fellow undergraduates and with friends at other universities up and down the country, stimulated by this same disillusionment, seemed always to return to two fundamentals—the content of university courses, and the unsatisfactory relation of those courses to the everyday world.

Probably at no other time is the crisis in the university so acute for the ordinary student as during his last term. Examination results and class lists are only one aspect of the stock-taking which students find forced upon them at that time. During the past summer term I was able, from the security of a post-graduate course and a comparatively settled future, to observe this process with sympathetic detachment. From conversations with Finals' candidates two conclusions seemed to emerge. First, they complained, almost without exception, of a sense of unreality which they found progressively overtaking them during their last two terms. Doubtless this was partly due to the strain of revision and an intensive pre-occupation with academic work; but they also seemed to think that it derived from a feeling that their work was meaningless except as a means to the end of passing the examination, and that the examination was an artificial climax to their studies. Secondly when discussing what they were going to do after they had got their degrees, they fell back, more often than not, on one or other of the current clichés, "Haven't a clue", or "I couldn't care less". Again this attitude is partly nothing more than a symptom of examination malaise, but in many cases it was a flippant disguise for real anxiety about unattractive prospects of future employment.

These conclusions apply far more to arts students than to science students. Whatever the intrinsic attractions of a science course

there is a much greater degree of continuity between it and the student's subsequent job; and, of course, graduate scientists are in heavy demand. Not a few arts students, whose immediate future was settled by a post-graduate course in their subject, admitted that they were only postponing the evil day when they would have to decide what they were going to do for a living.

### **Machines and morals**

In the middle of the examinations I received a letter which seemed to have some bearing on the second point. It was from a friend who had been with me at school, in the army and at university, but who had been "out in the world" for a year. He asked me, as an intending schoolmaster, to give him information about training courses and job prospects in the teaching profession, since he had found his commercial post completely unsatisfactory and was looking for an alternative. He also gave me news of three other friends who had been in the Sixth form with us, had subsequently done arts courses at the university, and were now faced with similar problems.

So far as I know our Classical Sixth was fairly typical of a good, day grammar school, and these malcontents fairly typical undergraduates. Only one continued to read Classics. Two chose Law, and one P.P.E. Their Service careers were neither excessively exciting nor excessively boring. Why should these more or less representative graduates be so discontented?

It has been generally agreed that university students are suffering from a want of purpose and sustaining ideals. Fundamentally the crisis in the university is a moral crisis. It reflects the prevailing moral confusion of the world at large which underlies the political and economic difficulties we are struggling with. In so far as the universities are more sensitive to moral issues, or, at least, more given to speculating about them, the confusion is more evident there than elsewhere; and in so far as the universities provide so many men who will have the opportunity or the responsibility of moulding public opinion, the crisis is especially acute for them. If some sort of moral revival could be achieved, either within the universities or by movements outside them, surely these minor symptoms of undergraduate dissatisfaction and uncertainty would disappear. Or can it be that they are not symptomatic but contributory causes of the prevailing illness? Would it, perhaps, be useful for the universities to consider the effect of the work, both

of students and graduates, on their moral and other standards, rather than of those standards on their work?

The connection between purposive work and purposeful living is obvious. We lament the passing of the craftsman not only because we have lost the beauty and skill of his products, but because we believe that his craftsmanship made him a fuller and better human being than the modern machine minder. The dominant theme of educational thought at the moment is that the pupil's natural interests shall be allowed to shape the purpose of his education as far as possible, thereby gaining for the educational process the immense energies which have so often previously opposed it. The Victorian view that the more one disliked a job or a subject of study, the better it was for one's soul, has been completely reversed. On a higher level the theme of good work producing good living is one which underlies much of Miss Dorothy Sayers' dramatic writing, and has been made explicit in her theological writings, especially the book-long analogy between God and the creative writer, *Mind of the Maker*. She argues that an ability to take delight in our work would not only reverse—or rather restore to its proper condition—our scale of values for work and leisure, but would do more than anything else to inspire a moral revival.

Unfortunately at this very time our economic system is producing a rapidly increasing number of jobs which no human being could take a real interest in doing. This is the reason for the weakness of Miss Sayers' argument. She admits, but dismisses briefly, the possibility that there are jobs which it would be impossible to take delight in doing. In fact, not only are such jobs the order of the day, but their effects on workers go beyond the destruction of delight in work. They encroach on the human qualities of the workers. Nor are these worthless jobs confined to the conveyor-belt factory. There are clerical and administrative "cogs in the machine", no less than manual labour "units of production". The qualification of a degree makes no difference.

### A new approach

Of course, the universities are not responsible for this state of affairs, and it is difficult to see how they could effect a direct improvement. Indeed, it is doubtful whether any appreciable improvement could be made without a revolution in our present production technique. But whether improvement is to come by



revolution or by a lengthy process of revision of existing practices, the universities ought to recognise this problem as an urgent responsibility both of their research workers in the fields of applied psychology and sociology, and of all faculties which send their graduates into industry and commerce. Further they should recognise that much of the prevailing depression is actively fostered by the prospect of the working life the world offers the young graduate.

The problem has been made more acute by the fact that the diminishing number of intrinsically interesting jobs has been accompanied by an increasing number of graduates. In a lecture he gave in Oxford at the end of the summer term, Sir Walter Moberly referred to the change he had been wont to notice, as a young don, in men who visited him a few years after taking their degrees. If memory serves, the example he quoted was a young colonial administrator on leave after his first tour of duty, matured by experience and responsibility, and rejoicing in doing a difficult and worthwhile job. But he was illustrating the changes which have taken place in university life. Today, for every graduate who gets opportunities of work comparable with those of a colonial administrator, there are fifteen or twenty who will have to take routine jobs offering neither responsibility nor scope for anything approaching creative work.

Yet the universities do not seem to have adjusted their attitude to suit the new conditions. It would be foolish to restrict the number of university entrants because there are not enough interesting jobs to go round. It would be equally foolish to follow the American plan of turning university courses into training courses for business administration, production methodology, and commercial technique. These courses tend to encourage the problem by parading industrial and commercial technique as an art, or even a religion. The real need is for university studies which will combat the technique, or at least mitigate its effects on graduates. To this end Hellenic, Mediæval, and even Edwardian concepts of the function of universities need revision. After all the pupils of Plato's Academy had very different post-graduate opportunities, in a society based on slave labour, from those afforded by twentieth-century industrial democracy. Nowadays we are all more or less slaves.

So far from accommodating their studies to commercial demands, or deliberately impoverishing their way of life and study, the uni-

versities must maintain their standards and enrich the content of their courses. It is not that we need a different sort of education from the Hellenic ideal, but we need that kind of education more urgently; it is no longer an aristocratic luxury, it is a universally necessary prophylactic. Not only are time and means lacking for the ideal of a life-long process of education, but the more or less limited education a graduate takes out into the world with him is in constant danger from a hostile environment. The universities today must foster the sort of education best calculated to sustain students in their everyday life, and the sort of education which they can continue to develop for themselves after they leave the university.

### **Over-specialization**

But as things are, so far from fortifying their students the universities seem to be importing more and more the methods of industry into their studies, and producing graduates already exhausted mentally and spiritually starved. Over-specialization is one aspect of the crisis in the university which has been particularly thoroughly discussed. Obviously by dividing faculty from faculty, by preventing the student acquiring a synoptic view of human problems, or even grasping the underlying principles of his own restricted field of study, it militates against his evolving sound and comprehensive principles for living no less than for learning. But it is less frequently realised that a highly specialized course of study may have the same effect on a student as methods of mass-production have on the repetition worker. Both tend to reduce the scope of work to the point where it becomes meaningless in itself, and thereby inspire a sense of frustration in the worker.

Within living memory it was, at one Oxford college at least, a matter for personal congratulation by the Head of the college if a man read for an honours school. Nowadays a man proposing to read for a pass degree would be a fit subject for a cartoon by H. M. Bateman. The virtual disappearance of the pass degree is the result of the increased number of students for whom a degree means a good job, and an honours degree a better job. But because the honours schools were originally designed for the pure scholar, the universities seem to have regarded the increasing number of candidates for honours degrees as showing a proportionate increase in the number of pure scholars studying at universities. Yet this is not true even for the greatly increased number of scholarship holders.

Many of them have neither the passion for scholarship nor the mental equipment necessary for a lifetime of research and detailed study. Even for the minority of students who are naturally fitted to be scholars it is debatable whether the existing honours courses, constantly embracing new findings of detailed research, are suitable as undergraduate studies. But there can be no doubt of their unsuitability for the average student who forms the bulk of our university population. He is so burdened by the weight of specialized detail that he is unable to compensate as, say, his Victorian counterpart could, by reading widely outside his studies. This is the answer to the argument that the real education of a university is acquired outside the lecture room, and is remembered when all the examination notes are forgotten. That was only true when degrees were unimportant, and syllabuses slight enough to permit of extensive private reading. Nowadays the degree is vital, and the average student cannot find time, or risk making it, to pursue extra-syllabus reading. In any case it seems unreasonable to argue that the real education of universities should be incidental to the students' studies, or even acquired in spite of them. The universities, especially the older residential ones, are great advocates of freedom of thought and study. Certainly the informal discussions of students, incidental arguments with tutors, and university societies enable students to hammer out their own problems and evolve their personal philosophies. But would this process lose by being more closely related to their studies ? Are not the issues of these informal debates as important, or more important, than the issues of textual criticism or monograph research ?

Specific measures to remedy the faults of present university courses have been as fully discussed as the faults themselves. But whether syllabuses are shortened or broadened, new subjects or novel combinations of subjects introduced, some form of pass degree revived or degree examinations abolished entirely, the universities must find ways of restoring the average student's belief in the intrinsic value of his studies. That belief will be both the climax to the present trends in pre-university education, and the foundation for a better approach to the problems of post-university work and life.



## VIII. UNIVERSITY CRISIS ? A CONSUMER'S VIEW

By Lord Simon of Wythenshawe

### I.

May I as a "consumer" of university products, both graduates and the results of research, be allowed to contribute to the discussion on the "Crisis in the University"? I have had nearly fifty years of active work in the engineering industry mainly as governing director of a group of highly technical companies which have engaged about fifty university graduates since the war. Several of the companies are in touch with research work in different universities. I have also had forty years' experience of public life and have had opportunities of observing the work of university graduates and contrasting it with that of persons educated in different ways and of the purely "practical" man in a good many fields.

May I begin by saying how warmly I welcome Sir Walter Moberly's book? Sir Walter is probably the greatest living authority on the varied aspects of university work and life in this country. He raises problems of the most fundamental importance, perhaps not so much to the universities, but certainly to civilization and in particular to democracy. The answers to his questions are supremely difficult, but one thing is certain: that it is of urgent importance that they should be fully discussed, and that the universities ought to play a far more important part in this great debate than they do to-day.

It is perhaps surprising that Sir Walter calls his book "*Crisis in the University*." There have, of course, been plenty of minor crises in the universities since the war in connection with the difficulties of staffing and the inadequacy of accommodation and equipment, but these are being vigorously dealt with and gradually overcome. They are not the kind of crisis with which Sir Walter deals. Is not his crisis in fact the crisis in the civilization of the western democracies rather than a crisis in the universities? That would I think, undoubtedly be the university view, and I do not think that Sir Walter himself would dissent from it.

I should like to consider in this article from the "consumer's" point of view what "crises", if any, actually exist in the universities, and what crises are likely to develop. Or, to put it in a different way, what on the one hand are the things which the universities are doing adequately and well, and on the other hand what are they not doing

well or not doing at all, and in which directions, if any, are they failing to carry out their full responsibilities?

## II. What the universities are doing well

There have been remarkable changes in the universities during the last five years: the number of students has been nearly doubled, the amount of research has been greatly increased, certain departments have been greatly extended. Government grants which, in relation to the pre-war period, can only be called immense, have been put at the disposal of the universities to make these changes possible. It is an indisputable fact that none of these important changes has been made solely or even mainly on the initiative of the universities; they are all due to Government pressure, though the universities have willingly co-operated.<sup>1</sup> The chief Government "interferences" with the universities have been as follows.

The first arose from the report of the Goodenough Committee on medical education appointed by the Minister of Health. The Government accepted the report and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Anderson, in his 1945 Budget made a grant to the universities for medical education which may well be called epoch-making for three reasons: first, because it was given for a specific purpose; secondly, because it was made subject to the approval by the University Grants Committee of detailed proposals from each university; and thirdly, because it was on a scale of generosity never before even contemplated.

The second was the report of the Barlow Committee appointed by the Lord President of the Council, recommending that the output of scientists from the universities ought to be doubled in ten years without any lowering of standards, and that the amount of research ought to be greatly expanded. The Committee's report was accepted by the Government and the necessary large funds have been provided.

There have been three other committees which dealt with specific aspects of university work; the McNair Committee, appointed by the Ministry of Education, as a result of whose report Institutes of Education have been founded in many universities; the Clapham Committee, appointed by the Lord President, whose report has already resulted in a rapid expansion of the social science depart-

<sup>1</sup> See "Universities and the Government," *Universities Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 79.

ments in the universities, and the Scarborough Committee, appointed by the Foreign Office, as a result of whose report grants have been made to a number of universities for a great expansion of Oriental and Slavonic studies.

In all three cases the Government followed the precedent set by Sir John Anderson as regards medical grants: grants have been given covering the whole cost of the expansion, subject to approval of specific proposals from each university by the U.G.C.

Government grants represented about one-third of the income of the universities before the war; they are now nearly two-thirds, and likely to rise further. The generosity of the Government during the last five years has been such that the British universities have had a much greater increase in spending power than has ever happened before in a similar period in this country, and perhaps even in the United States. Such generosity, with very little control, may not continue indefinitely. Is there a danger of an "austerity crisis" here?

The reports of the five committees cover, I think, all the major developments in the universities since the war. The Government has pressed the universities to undertake these responsibilities and has offered to pay for them. So far as I know, in no case has a university refused one of these offered grants, notwithstanding the specific responsibilities for teaching and research attached to them.

What does this mean? It appears to mean that the universities are doing what the country wants: what the country is prepared to pay for.<sup>1</sup> The Government has made largely increased grants, many of them allocated to special purposes; the universities are spending them on the lines desired by the Government. But it is not enough for the universities to educate their students; the students must find jobs, and the universities are turning out in much increased numbers, broadly speaking, the kind of graduates to whom the country is prepared to pay suitable salaries.

Does this constitute a threat to the independence of the universities? It certainly represents a big swing away from complete self-determination by the universities as to the scope of their teaching and research, towards a planned economy under Government stimulus and control. Is it possible that further developments on these lines may lead to a crisis of freedom?

<sup>1</sup> "A Vice-Chancellor comments: 'Your conclusion that the universities are doing what the country wants arrested my attention, because I am keen that more often than not the universities should "lead" not "follow", and I firmly believe they have such a duty to perform. They must not be any more influenced by the box office than a first-class repertory theatre.' "



The universities are undoubtedly doing a good job on these lines. I have been a member of the Council of Manchester University for thirty years, and have therefore had opportunities of knowing it pretty well. Improvements and developments are desirable in all sorts of directions, but I have no hesitation whatever in saying that the five hundred men and women who constitute the staff of the University under the direction of the Vice-Chancellor, are persons of outstanding integrity and ability, devoted to their duties of teaching and research, steadily maintaining high standards of scholarship, and that the University as a whole is doing the work which the country wants it to do effectively and well.

Manchester University is an institution of which the country should be proud and I am sure that the same applies to the other British universities. The universities are first-rate institutions carrying out admirably the responsibilities which the country lays upon them. It is nonsense to talk about a "crisis in the universities", at least in any ordinary meaning of the words.

### III. The production crisis

Britain is at present involved in two major crises: its own crisis of production, and the moral crisis of the Western democracies. Let us consider how far the universities are involved.

Nobody doubts that the present position as regards the balance of trade is a menacing national crisis. We are living beyond our means with the help of money borrowed from the U.S.A., we are not facing the problem boldly or realistically, there may well be a crash with very serious results. The whole crisis, though complex and hard to understand, is quite certainly due to one thing and one thing only—that we are not producing enough to maintain our present standard of living.

It is a shocking fact that the productivity per head is at least twice as great in the United States as in this country. Mr. Rostas writes as follows: "A comparison of output and employment in 31 manufacturing industries shows that, in the pre-war period 1935-39, average productivity—as measured by physical output per worker—was at least twice as high (2.2 times) in the U.S. as in Britain. If allowance is made for the shorter working week in the U.S. output per man-hour was perhaps 2.8 times as high in the U.S. as in Britain."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Comparative Productivity in British and American Industry*, by L. Rostas. (National Institute of Economic and Social Research, Occasional Papers 13). Cambridge University Press, 1948.

It is true that the United States has certain advantages: greater natural resources, a larger market, little war damage. But there is strong evidence that the universities of the United States play an important part. It is no exaggeration to say that nearly all the directors and higher executives throughout the great bulk of United States industry have had a university education. Not necessarily of the highest standard, but they have learnt to think about the larger problems of industry and of human relations, to know how to use scientists and technical and economic advisers, and to use their brains in a way which the purely "practical" man is incapable of doing.

Their universities and their great technological institutes are not only producing graduates of all kinds at the rate of about twenty for every one produced at our universities,<sup>1</sup> but their research and development work is on an incomparably greater scale than ours and in general this work is done in much closer touch with industry than is the case in Britain. Again, in the field of management and human relations in industry, the United States has taken the lead from the days of Taylor's scientific management. There is a large volume of research into all kinds of managerial problems ranging from time and motion study to psychological investigations of the best conditions for obtaining maximum output. The American universities devote an immense amount of time and study to the problems of industrial production and there can be no doubt of the importance and success of this work.

#### IV. British production

Official reports on the coal, cotton and building industries show the annual production per man in this country to be about half that in the United States. The case which most vividly brings out the need for more university education is the coal industry. After World War I the annual production per man in the Ruhr and in Holland was less than ours. By 1936 the production in each case was about 50 per cent. more than ours, and according to the Reid report natural conditions were comparable. There can be little doubt that the main responsibility for this disastrous British failure must be laid on the shoulders of the directors of the coal mines. The bulk of them were "practical" men with limited education. Broadly speaking, they did not study foreign methods of production;

<sup>1</sup> *Political Quarterly*, October 1944, p. 286.

they did not employ enough good mining engineers. Indeed, these did not exist; there were about ten schools of coal mining in the universities of this country, all of them quite second-rate. Enough good mining engineers were not being produced by the universities; it was not mainly the universities' fault, because if they had existed they would probably not have been employed.

If we had had enough able and well-educated colliery directors, they would have seen that we got enough able and well-educated mining engineers and other technicians; our output would have increased as fast as that of the Ruhr and Holland, and would, with the same number of men, have been about 40 million tons per annum more in 1938 than in fact it was. It is needless to point out what a difference such an increased output of coal would have made to the whole financial position of this country today.

It should be added that the Ruhr rate of output could not have been obtained in this country without great improvement in the exceedingly bad relations between the employers and the miners' union. Here again, can anyone doubt that better educated directors would have produced better relations with the trade unions than those achieved by the "practical" man?

Even today the universities are showing very little interest in the problems of production on the human side. The Government is responsible for founding the Institute of Management; outside bodies like the National Institute of Industrial Psychology and the Tavistock Clinic are doing pioneer work. The universities are only just beginning to think about these problems on a tiny scale.

The following conclusions seem to me to emerge:

1. The standard of living in the United States is very much higher than in this country. This is largely because the production per annum per head in American industry is about double what it is in this country.

2. The American universities in various ways contribute largely to efficiency of production in the United States;<sup>1</sup> the universities in this country do far too little in this direction.

3. The universities should aim at producing far larger numbers of graduates for the higher technical and managerial posts in industry. They should have, or rather should be so trained as to be likely to

<sup>1</sup> Would it not be a good thing for the University Grants Committee to send a Mission to the United States to study this problem of the help that universities are giving to American production?



acquire by practical experience, a wide understanding of human relations and of scientific method; they should have a high degree of curiosity, they should know where to seek the best advice, and how to use it.

### V. The moral crisis

Sir Walter Moberly's "crisis" has nothing to do with what we have been discussing. He hardly mentions the number of students, the shortage of buildings and teachers, whether the universities have any responsibility for the national production crisis, whether there may be a financial crisis in the universities. Sir Walter's is the moral crisis of the Western democracies. He suggests that in days past the universities gave their students a philosophy of life; or at least provided an environment which influenced many of them to think seriously about fundamentals and helped them to become leaders. Now there is chaos. He suggests that the students are turned out as excellent specialists neither caring nor knowing where civilization is going.

Lord Samuel wrote in the Philosophy symposium in Vol. 1, No. 4 of the *Universities Quarterly* (p. 335) as follows: "It is now fully recognized that the troubles of our deeply troubled times are the penalty of wrong ideas; that our wars have been wars between conflicting philosophies of life; that, fundamentally, the present crisis of our civilization is a moral crisis. It is not likely to be resolved until mankind sets out to rebuild religion and ethics, politics and economics, upon basic principles that can be generally accepted by modern man".

Sir Walter wants the universities to do much more to discover these basic principles, and to turn out graduates who will be leaders in disseminating them among the people. But I think, in justice to the universities, we must recognise that university graduates do render great services to democracy in the field of public affairs. The most conspicuous instance is the administrative civil service. This consists of a body of men and women from the universities of quite outstanding ability and integrity, serving their country for modest salaries with a devotion and success which, I think it is safe to say, have rarely been equalled and never exceeded in the whole course of history by any other group. What is their "philosophy of life"? Nobody knows what proportion of them is Christian or humanist, and nobody cares because that seems to be irrelevant.

They share the democratic values—belief in fair play and decency and freedom—with the great bulk of the people of this country. And these vague and undefined values are in practice found to be all that is needed if, when they leave the university as specialists, they learn to care and know and think about public affairs in their daily life. On the other hand, it is certainly true that the universities turn out many specialists who remain specialists all their life and make no attempt whatever to understand the meaning or the working of democracy. For instance, when I took the engineering course at Cambridge nearly fifty years ago it was purely technical; no don either in the University or in the College ever spoke to me about anything except technical subjects with one exception. I applied, as a humanist, to be exempted from compulsory attendance at chapel, and the dean gave me exemption on condition that I did not attempt to convert other undergraduates to my pernicious views. That was the only attempt made by any don to help me to form a philosophy of life. I have, in fact, formed a fairly clear one; but it owes nothing whatever to Cambridge.

To take another example from engineering, a young man just down from a provincial university who got a First in engineering and played football for the university team, told me that he had never discussed anything except engineering with any don, nor had he discussed anything with any student except engineering shop, football and smutty stories.

In the prospectus introducing *The Universities Quarterly* in 1946 were included the following:

*"Some challenging statements. How far are they true?"*

- (a) "The science graduate knows nothing about the humanities and regrets it. The arts graduate knows no science and is proud of it."
- (b) "The arts faculties are sick, and I am not sure that other faculties are altogether immune from disease."
- (c) "We regard ourselves as technically well-equipped barbarians." (A group of young science graduates.)
- (d) "My experience of university teaching has not led me to suspect that the teachers are either paid or promoted for broadening the minds of their students."
- (e) "The schools are deeply concerned with training character, the universities ignore it."
- (f) "The universities are interested in everything except education." (A professor of education.)
- (g) "The success of universities is measured by the degree to which they sense and serve the needs of the community upon which they rely for

financial and spiritual support . . . western civilization has long suffered from over-specialization. . . . One of the most devastating criticisms that can be levelled at higher education in America throughout its history is that its fruits have been far more private and personal than public and social." (Professor Newton Edwards, U.S.A.)

The *Universities Quarterly* was originally founded by the Association for Education in Citizenship in the hope that it might do something to help in the directions which Moberly desires. The following quotations are taken from the first pamphlet issued by the Association itself:

"We democrats believe that all that differentiates us from the beasts, all that is noble and fine in human civilization, is due to the free use of the human reason, to the gradual development of methods of discussion and persuasion as opposed to violence; that the disinterested search for the spiritual values of truth, goodness, and beauty is only possible in a state built up and carried on by the co-operation of free and responsible men and women. . . . There has been since 1870 an immense increase in the amount of education, and a great improvement in its quality. And yet so great a democrat as Lord Bryce could write a few years ago that the people of England were then no more capable of choosing their leaders than they had been in 1870. Why has education not been more successful in producing citizens fitted to bring about a better social order? The reason seems to us to be simple: we have never given sufficient thought to the best method of educating a student for the purpose of fitting him to play his part as a citizen of a democratic state. . . .

"To-day things have changed. The political world is so complex and difficult that it is essential to train men just as consciously and deliberately for their duties as citizens as for their vocation or profession."

It is not for me, as a "consumer," to suggest to the universities what are suitable courses for education in citizenship, though Modern Greats at Oxford and one or two courses at other universities are good examples of encouraging experiments. But I have no doubt whatever myself that by far the greatest service which the universities could render is to produce the largest practicable number of graduates, whether in arts or science, so equipped and with interests so directed as to be likely to acquire an understanding of the values and problems of democracy and to develop into leaders in public affairs of vision and wisdom.



# THE COMMISSION ON GERMAN UNIVERSITIES

**By Lord Lindsay of Birker**

*Principal, University College of North Staffordshire*

In the spring of 1948 the British Military Government in Germany appointed a Commission to report on the future of German universities in a democratic state. It was meant to be something like a Royal Commission in this country. It could concern itself of course only with the universities in the British Zone. It consisted of Germans with the exception of two foreigners—one Swiss, Professor von Salis, Professor of Modern History in the famous Technical University of Zurich, and one from this country, myself. There were four professors—from Hamburg and Gottingen, the Technical University of Aachen, and the Head of the Teachers Training Institute at Kiel. The Chairman was the respected head of the German Co-operative Wholesale Society. There was a trade unionist, two clerics, the Dean of the Cathedral at Cologne, and an Evangelical Bishop from Dusseldorf, and one woman, an officer in the educational administration of Nieder-Sachsen. We started with the inevitable questionnaire sent to all universities and technical universities, in fact all the “Hochschule”, in the British Zone, and to representatives of German opinion. We interviewed witnesses, mostly from England and America, and had many meetings and much informal discussion, and sent our report to Military Government in October. When we began we were all at sixes and sevens, but our report was unanimous. The unanimity was genuine. We did really agree.

It is most instructive for one like myself, long accustomed to consider the problems of British universities, to be brought into this kind of contact with German universities. The approach was so different. We in this country, I at least, have the vaguest ideas of how “the mission” of the universities should be defined. I know something of the difficulties facing the existing ones, and I have my ideas of the things which have to be done in society which only the universities can do. But with that empirical attitude I am ordinarily content, unless something makes it impossible.

How different the German approach! The German universities of the present day still reflect the “idea of a university” formulated by von Humboldt in the beginning of the nineteenth century—a

clear and unifying idea which can be stated without difficulty. In the nineteenth century, at least in the early part of it, German universities, re-created by these new principles, were the leaders of German thought and the admiration of the learned world. Now, the former glory had, it was agreed, largely departed. The German universities, instead of leading Germany, had put up practically no resistance to Hitler. They were distrusted by a large section of the community; their isolation from it is widely complained of. They are still admirable centres of research, but they provide their students with no philosophy of life. They complain, as we complain, of the departmentalism, the *Zersplitterung*, of their studies. Except for a select few, their students are predominantly concerned with vocational studies. Something has gone wrong.

We had to make up our minds at the outset whether the Humboldtian idea of a university was completely out of date or whether it could be reinterpreted in the light of contemporary modern conditions. We all agreed that only in the second way could the German universities be preserved, and that our task was to preserve the great qualities of the best in German universities and yet, if possible, point the way for the remedying of their defects.

### **The idea of a German university**

The idea of a university as the Germans conceive it is easily stated. It is a society of teachers and scholars united in the pursuit of "the truth". The method of this pursuit is a close unity of research and teaching, "*Forschung und Lehre*". The essential condition of this pursuit of the truth is freedom, *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*. The teacher is to be free to follow the wind of the argument wherever it leads him, and the scholar—remarkable demand in our eyes—is to be free to choose his teacher or teachers and under him to devote himself to what branch of learning and take what examination he pleases. The German word *Die Wahrheit*, which I have translated "the truth", is, especially in these days of logical positivism, really untranslatable and even Germans admit that the conception as they use it depends on a philosophy now outdated. The "seamless robe" of the truth has long been torn in pieces by technology.

How the fine flower of German universities grows from this conception is not hard to see. It implies the professor with the self-chosen band of scholars, each learning and also taking his part in research. Its methods are the seminar and the colloquium,

its only mark of distinction the doctorate. It implies, of course, a very high standard in professor and more especially in students. If we ask "Who is capable of really rising to the opportunities of this system?", the answer is a very small proportion indeed of those who wish to come to a university. What happens to the rest? They ordinarily take no university degree and compete for civil service examinations of one kind and another, which in Germany are far more technical and professional than they are with us.

It would not be hard to make the German universities self-perpetuating research institutes and nothing else. It would then be necessary to find other institutions to train the young who were not going to be professors, but needed education from 18 or 19 to 22 or 23 if they were to play the part in society of which they are capable. To abandon the German universities to be mere research institutes seemed a council of despair. The Commission therefore addressed itself to the consideration of the isolation of the universities from the rest of the community. It began with a significant change in the statement of the function of the university. Its aim, they stated, is the pursuit of truth through research and teaching *in the service of man*. Truth is no longer to be regarded, is the implication, as a self-sufficient independent end. The worth of its pursuit is qualified by those significant five last words.

### **The service of the community**

The universities then are to serve the community, of course in their own significant way, of the validity of which they are to be judge. Their service to the community consists in the pursuit of truth and truth is not necessarily what the community or its representatives wish the universities to teach. Therefore the universities' teaching must be free and yet they must somehow in their constitution be in touch with the community. This dilemma was formerly met in a fashion in the German universities by the carefully defined powers of the Minister of Education, and, in Prussian universities, of "the Curatorium". The Commission feared that these arrangements might not in these days safeguard the freedom of universities as they had in the past, and in any case did not think they provided for the proper relations between the universities and the community.

The Commission propose something not unlike the constitution of the new English universities, a *Hochschulbeirat*—like the Court—a large number of representatives of all bodies concerned with



educational questions, trade unions included, and then a *Hochschulrat*—or Council—a small body of not more than ten with a whole-time Principal, the chosen members being elected in equal numbers from the Court, the Senate and the Culturminister. There had been something like this in the Universities of Bremen and of Cologne, but on the whole these are revolutionary proposals. The German universities have been governed by their Senates, indeed one might almost say by their Faculties, and their reaction to these proposals for the introduction of a lay element is often to say that the result will be the government of the expert by the ignorant.

The fragmentation of studies the Commission propose to cure by the institution of what they call a *studium generale*—a general course incumbent on all students. Several German universities, notably Tübingen, Heidelberg and Göttingen, have already made experiments of this kind and it is interesting to notice how unanimously the German technical universities are pressing for the setting up or the enlargement of a “philosophic” faculty. The German reaction against over-specialisation is, I think, stronger than ours. They have perhaps suffered more.

The Commission propose, in dealing with the Senate and Faculties, to break down the monopoly of the professors by insisting on the representation of lecturers on Faculty and Senate, and to create a new kind of professor whose main job shall be teaching. The position of the lecturers at present is acknowledged by everyone to be unsatisfactory. Their only hope of a career is to become a professor, their only hope of becoming a professor is by their distinction in research. I was reminded as I listened to their complaints of the position of the assistant in Scottish universities fifty or sixty years ago. As we have found out, a regular establishment of lecturers and a career for the senior lecturer are the only cure for this evil. The Commission propose something on those lines—to put the emphasis of the university’s function more on teaching, *Lehre und Forschung* rather than *Forschung und Lehre*.

### The technical revolution

To go over all the proposals of the Commission would take too long. I hope readers will get the report and study it. But I may be allowed to conclude with some general reflections. The history of the German universities in the last hundred and fifty years is full of instruction to those who are considering the “crisis of the univer-

sity." They began under such happy auspices, inspired by a unifying and illuminating idea. The truth their professors and scholars sought was a unified body of knowledge. To be a student of one of their great teachers was as well a training for public life and government, for membership of the learned professions and for the advancement of learning itself. Their professors and students formed a small and learned aristocracy in days when aristocracies of one kind or another were taken for granted and their leadership accepted.

Then came what I shall call the technical revolution. That meant that whereas in earlier times the great mass of productive work was performed by customary and hereditary skills, now, more and more, efficient production depends upon the extent to which scientific research inspires and directs industrial production. That means an enormous demand for technical specialists, who must, many of them, have university or similar training. The old balance of studies is completely upset. Whether we follow the German model and distinguish between technical universities and universities proper confined to the basic subjects, or muddle them, all together in the English manner, does not really matter. The university output will consist increasingly of technical specialists who have not been trained to be citizens. Hitler met the difficulty by proposing that the universities should train a select governing class whose orders the technicians trained elsewhere would unhesitatingly obey. Some such distinction between institutions meant for technical experts and institutions for administrators exists, I am told, in Russia. A democratic community cannot submit to that specialization of its ruling class. All its citizens ought to have some sort of skill and be, therefore, specialists; but equally all ought to have an understanding of the purposes and common life of the community and be educated as citizens. They need not necessarily go to university institutions of the same kind, but all university institutions will somehow have to fulfil both these purposes and we can no longer pretend that by being given the training needed for technical purposes a student is also educated. We are beginning nowadays to recognise that education in science and in the humanities must go together. The Germans seem to me, as I have said, to have already taken this dilemma more seriously than we have. Their experiments are not the product of the Commission, they were already being started when the Commission was appointed. They are well worth studying. Of particular interest I thought were the proposals to



set up or develop "philosophical" or sociological faculties in the great German technical institutions.

But to consider the place of universities in a *democratic* community raises another problem in whose solution we in this country are undoubtedly ahead of Germany, far though we still have to go. There is nothing in Germany to equal our adult education movement.

### Universities and the industrial revolution

Consider again the effects of the industrial revolution. In a successful industrial nation the spirit of scientific research is to take the place of customary and hereditary skills. But that is to take the place of craftsmanship in the old sense. Can the spirit of scientific research, the eagerness to ask whether what is being done cannot be done better or whether what has been thought cannot be thought better—can that spirit take over the sense of quality which craftsmanship gave? Ideally, I believe it can. But how thoroughly do we suppose this spirit of scientific research can permeate a community, or how thoroughly are we determined that it shall permeate a community? For there are two answers to this question—the one oligarchic, the second democratic. The oligarchic solution is to train a minority of highly skilled technical specialists directing a majority of unskilled machine-minders who have lost the sense of quality formerly given by craftsmanship and have been given nothing to replace it. That is virtually a slaveholding aristocracy or oligarchy. The democratic solution would be to ensure that the spirit of scientific enquiry, as I have defined it, permeates in some degree or other the whole community, and to provide educational institutions to bring this about. These institutions to my mind will have to be of different kinds. We have already in this country accepted the view that secondary schools should be of different kinds and, whatever our practice may be, we preach that each of those kinds of school should have a distinctive quality of its own without being graded as higher or lower. I think that if we are to become a democratic community pervaded by the spirit of scientific research, we shall have to have an equal, if not a greater, variety of institutions at the university stage.

These may seem to English readers far-fetched conclusions. Nothing like them will be found in the report of the German Commission. They have been borne in on me by considering several things—(a) the great difference which the widespread advance of



adult education, both vocational and non-vocational, has made to the universities of this country. University professors in Germany tend to regard themselves as an élite, set apart from the rest of the community. Adult education has largely cured our universities of that. (b) The German distinction between universities proper and technical universities. The complaint of isolation from the community does not apply to the Technische Hochschule. They may have defects but they are eager to deal with them. They believe in extra-mural education and have active plans for its development. There is, I know, considerable difference of opinion among scientists in this country about the soundness of this distinction. I was much impressed by it. The Technische Hochschule of Zurich is quite distinct from the University of Zurich but as distinguished. If we here regarded our university institutions as having different but equally important functions, we might consider the different functions which the community needs universities to fulfil, without quarrelling about prestige.

Thirdly, it is impossible to consider the contrast between the best things in German universities, which are very good indeed, and their defects, without seeing the danger of attending too much and too exclusively to the high standard *one is accustomed to*. That tends to mean high standard in a narrowing circle. Undoubtedly some of the defects from which the German universities are suffering come from their exclusive consideration of high standards in research and neglect of other standards such as high standards of teaching, of usefulness to the community in other matters than learning, and so on. I may perhaps sum this up by saying that if I had to choose between the American university system with its great variety and its frequent lapses from any standard, and the German with its exclusive occupation with a high standard in research, I should choose the former.

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## REVIEWS

PERSONNEL SELECTION IN THE BRITISH FORCES. By PHILIP E. VERNON AND JOHN B. PARRY. (*University of London Press*, 20s.)

During the war psychological methods of selection were used in the Forces on a far larger scale and for far wider purposes than ever before in this country. There are probably few educated people who have not formed some opinion about the work and value of psychologists in this connection, though for the most part these views, both favourable and unfavourable, have been based on inadequate information. It is true that the report of the official expert committee on *The Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services* published in 1947 gave interested readers evidence on which to make up their minds intelligently, but it is unlikely that this document is as widely known as it should be. There have also been a great many valuable monographs in the technical journals dealing with various aspects of the work done, but these have been written solely for specialists. They are listed in an admirable bibliography at the end of this book. Dr. Vernon and Dr. Parry have, therefore, done a useful service in presenting to the serious reader the evidence not only about the experiment as a whole, but about the value of each part of the procedure both by itself and in combination. Their book could not be easy reading, but it is rewarding; and one may be grateful to the writers for their gifts of clarity and brevity.

At the end the writers give us a summary of their main conclusions. "The value of classification schemes", they write, "has been proved beyond all doubt not only in connection with such jobs as Naval, Army and A.T.S. mechanics and clerks, but also among R.A.F. aircrew. Less striking, but none the less appreciable success, was demonstrated in officer selection." There has been more widespread disagreement over the methods of personality assessment used in W.O.S.Bs. than over any other part of selection work in the Services and no doubt, therefore, particular interest will be aroused by the authors' cautious conclusions. "The Boards", they say, "have shown the superiority of thorough study of candidates by several trained judges to ordinary interview methods of selection, and this aspect of W.O.S.B. procedure is worth applying to the selection of managers, administrative Civil Servants, and in other high-grade occupations. The inclusion of exercises, analogous to



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the job for which selection is being made, helps to create confidence in the scheme, but does not necessarily improve its scientific worth. Observations of groups of candidates performing these exercises, and judgments of personality based on them, may be fully as subjective and unreliable as interview diagnoses. Far more investigation is needed into the best way of standardizing the methods and making them more objective". It is interesting to compare the different approach to an apparently equally tricky problem of personality assessment with which the R.A.F. is experimenting. There we are told that efforts are being made to build up a reliable standard interview in which assessments of only those character traits held to be important are to be rated, and that the outcome of the first small experiments was a restrained optimism about the new type of interview. The alternative of substituting a much more elaborate procedure, probably on W.O.S.B. lines, was considered but rejected.

It is impossible within the limits of available space to draw attention to more than one or two of the many interesting findings recorded in this book. The present reviewer was particularly interested in the writers' judgment, based on American experience, that among the most valuable measures of suitability for promotion to posts of responsibility and leadership are ratings by a man's fellows as opposed to his superiors. Some preliminary work on this approach to finding possible officer talent was done in the British army, but it was never developed for reasons which had nothing to do with psychology.

Psychologists will naturally turn for a technical appreciation of this book to the scientific journals, an appreciation which the present reviewer is in any case entirely unqualified to undertake. But the writers address their book also to "the industrialist or educationist who hopes that the methods may be of value in the peace time selection of employees, students or pupils". Such a reader will find much encouragement and many salutary warnings. One cannot help wondering why the authors exclude from this list civil servants, officers, and students of economics and public administration. Many of them will be interested in the information which this book gives; they would also be interested in other administrative and policy problems arising from selection which the authors leave entirely on one side. It is to be hoped that before it is too late either the present writers or others acquainted with the war-time history of

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personnel selection will put on record their experience and judgment on, for instance, such matters as the place of psychology in national manpower planning. In 1941 psychologists were called in to frame and operate comprehensive schemes for the assessment and allocation of future recruits. This amounted to a New Deal, if not to a revolution, in the practice of the Service departments. There was no similar change in the practice of the Ministry of Labour. Psychologists helped in the deployment of manpower within the fighting services; they were not concerned with the deployment of the nation's manpower as a whole. It is easy to explain how this distinction came about, but did it justify itself?

Although the authors do not discuss this issue, they refer to some of its effects. The Army, for instance, always believed that it was given proportionately more stupid and fewer able recruits than the other Services. Was this so? This should have been easy enough to answer since during the greater part of the war all recruits were given intelligence tests; but, since each Service was a law to itself, the authors have to use a complicated process to reach a tentative answer, which partly supports the Army view. The Army also felt that it did not get enough intelligent men to do its difficult jobs, while it had to carry a surplus of very dull men who counted against its ceiling. This belief could only be tested against an assessment of the minimum needs of the Army in terms of intelligence. In the early days of selection a rough estimate of this sort was made and attracted a good deal of interest, but it never influenced planning. The planners took material resources into account, but they did not deal with human resources except in terms of simple numbers of "bodies" and of already skilled men. One would have valued the opinion of the authors on the possibility of providing information reliable enough to make psychological manpower planning practicable. And, if it was practicable, would it have been worth while? Or did events roughly justify the tacit assumption that if enough men were provided there would be enough men who could do the job?

There are one or two minor points which need attention in any new edition. It should be made clear what period is covered by this book. Certainly it stops short well before the date of publication. It would also be desirable to explain the part which the authors themselves played in the story they tell, and room might perhaps be found to mention at least the names of the chief psychological

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STUDIES IN REGIONAL PLANNING. By D. E. J. DAYSH AND OTHERS.  
(*George Philip and Son Ltd.*, 25s.).

The authors of this book approach their subject from the practical point of view of positive planning, and would therefore be making a real contribution to it if they merely pointed the way to further study. In fact, however, they do more than this, because though they do not claim to have made exhaustive studies of their regions and emphasize the need for more detailed work, they have succeeded in presenting the kind of picture on which the main problems stand out in clear relief.

The starting point from which they want those responsible for planning to set out is that "industry must be regarded as the kernel of the problem," and indeed even those regions whose main asset is scenic beauty would be barren enough with this alone. There is no more satisfaction in the splendours of nature accompanied by derelict homesteads and neglected husbandry than in thriving industry that has needlessly despoiled the countryside. It is right to revolt against this spoliation but not to go to the opposite extreme of concluding that progress is incompatible with beauty. By planned development in place of haphazard growth, it should be possible to reconcile scenic beauty with material progress and to show that the most satisfactory basis for a beautiful countryside is the prosperity of its inhabitants—prosperity in the wide sense of full employment combined with good living conditions in town and country.

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The reader who follows the story of this book from John o' Groats to Lands End *via* the Highlands and Isles, Central Scotland, North East England, Cumberland, the East Midlands, Gloucestershire-Wiltshire-Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, will be left with a feeling of sorrow that so much of the land should have been despoiled and so many of its people submitted to the scourge of unemployment. But for all that he will have caught as its message a call to action and a challenge for the future. For the story does not stop in the years of the depression. It shows how the revival of employment during the war called forth reserves of labour and energy, and reminded people of the great natural wealth lying both underground and in the soil, and of the value of existing communications, particularly railways. Since no one is likely to forget the magnitude of the problem created by the havoc of 150 years of uncontrolled development, it is permissible to draw attention also to the assets which will make it possible to tackle the problem. In spite of the mistakes that may be made to-day and in the future, it should be possible by means of planning based on knowledge to avoid a repetition of the wholesale spoliation of the countryside, and of the unbalanced growth of industrial development that took place in the past and was so largely responsible for mass unemployment. The authors do not conceal the extent of the problem but they inspire confidence that it can be tackled, and this confidence is an essential part of ultimate success.

There is not, in this book, the detailed study that is to be found for instance in the publications of the West Midland Group, where an entire volume based on lengthy and detailed research is devoted to one county or conurbation. What has been attempted is something different. The authors have purposely taken a wide field

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so as to give a picture of the problem as a whole, and in order to cover the ground they have made what use they could of published material. This has been supplemented by special research and by the different authors' personal knowledge of the various regions. This has resulted in some of the regions—notably the Highlands and Isles—being treated in more detail than others, and it has also meant that the method of presentation varies a little; but it has meant too that each region in its turn has been handled by people who personally know its problems and care about their solution.

Each section is accompanied by a map which has the merit of being able to be studied at the same time as the text. The maps are bold in outline and in the main clear, though the boundaries marking the development areas are hard to follow and the different shadings make some of the places mentioned difficult to find. But these are small points in a book which bears the mark of careful study on the part of a group of people who really care about their subject. Professor Daysh and his colleagues are to be congratulated on presenting in so readable a form so much material which is of vital interest not only to the planners but to the public. MARY MORRIS.

THE POWER AND LIMITS OF SCIENCE. By E. F. CALDIN. (*Chapman and Hall*, 12s. 6d.)

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This book is not to be regarded as a major original contribution to the philosophy of science nor would the author claim it to be such. Rather it is an attempt in clear and simple language, to set out the leading ideas which must be followed in that part of the now necessary task of reintegrating our culture, which concerns science, and for this reason deserves wide circulation. P. A. MORAN.

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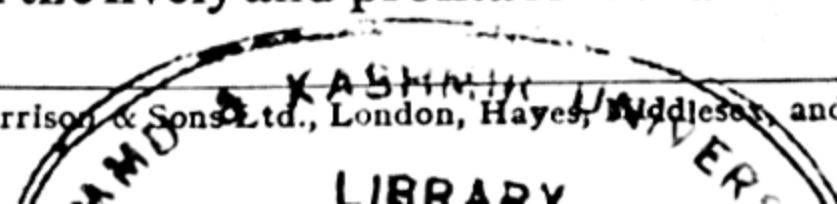
it out. But it is also true that the best of us have not weighed carefully enough the ethical teaching of Christ. How often is the Sermon on the Mount quoted as the quintessence of Christian morality without reference to the fact, so often displayed elsewhere in the New Testament, that it is impossible to live the Christian life without the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit? It is this fact which is so strongly demonstrated by Canon Dewar by his careful study of all the books of the New Testament. Moreover, since no other religion has any comparable doctrine of the grace of God and of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we see here the distinctiveness of Christianity.

But having said this, which is perfectly true, and needs to be impressed upon us all, it is easy to slip into the error of making Christianity altogether other than any other religion that ever was. Canon Dewar seems to us to be in danger of slipping into this error, seeing only black and white and no half-shades. For him our Lord's condemnation of the Pharisees is not just a dramatic way of illustrating how easy it is for the most religious people to lose the essence of religion, but a condemnation of all the ethical teaching of the Judaism of His day, and indeed of all the Old Testament, as being on a different basis from that of Christianity. If that were true, the Old Testament would not be in any sense a preparation for the New. But to see that it is not true, one only has to realize that the sentence "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. v. 48) is based on the Old Testament saying "Be ye holy for I am holy" (Lev. xi, 44); and that "Be ye therefore merciful even as your Father is merciful" (Lk. vi, 36) is based on Ps. ciii, 13 "As a father is merciful to his children, so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him"; though in each case our Lord carries the parallel to a greater height.

There are difficulties of interpreting some of the ethical statements of the Epistles, and Canon Dewar does not burke them. But it may be that a better way of dealing with them than his would be to acknowledge boldly that some of the New Testament writers—like the writer to the Hebrews who sees no hope of repentance for apostates—had not quite gained the mind of Christ. If so, we should look to the New Testament Epistles, not for the full ethical system of Christianity, but for a first, and indeed a brilliant, attempt to work towards it.

These remarks are not intended as criticisms of the book, but as illustrations of the lively and profitable debates which it will encourage.

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